

L I F E
O F
Commodore Thomas Macdonough
U. S. NAVY

RODNEY MACDONOUGH





COMMODORE THOMAS MACDONOUGH, U. S. NAVY
(From the portrait by Gilbert Stuart)

LIFE

OF

Commodore Thomas Macdonough

U. S. NAVY

BY

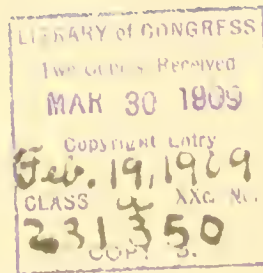
RODNEY MACDONOUGH

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21

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

IN preparing this volume free use has been made of the collection of papers left by Commodore Macdonough, and now owned by the author. One of the most interesting of these is his autobiography, which covers the period from 1800, when he entered the navy, through 1822, and is published in full. The other papers consist of several hundred letters, orders, reports, etc., some of them personal, but most of them official. Among the signatures on these papers are those of Perry, Hull, Bainbridge, Porter, Chauncey, Stewart, Rodgers and other well known naval officers of that time.

The official records in the Navy and the Treasury Departments at Washington naturally furnished much interesting and valuable information. Original documents have been consulted and used whenever practicable.

RODNEY MACDONOUGH.

FEBRUARY 11, 1909.

C O N T E N T S

CHAPTER I

Macdonough's ancestors — Thomas, of county Kil-	PAGE
dare, Ireland — James, the emigrant — Thomas,	
the Revolutionary soldier — The family home in	
Delaware	11

CHAPTER II

COMMODORE MACDONOUGH'S AUTOBIOGRAPHY
1800-1822

Enters the navy — War with France — Joins the Ganges — Cruise to the West Indies against the French — War with Tripoli — Ordered to the Constellation — Cruise in the Mediterranean — Returns to the United States and is ordered to the Philadelphia for Mediterranean service — Providential escape from the fate of the officers and crew of the Philadelphia — Joins the Enterprise — Participates in the burning of the Philadelphia and in the operations before Tripoli — Peace with Tripoli — Returns to the United States — Ordered to Middletown, Ct. — Attached to various vessels — Voyage in the merchant service — War with England — Ordered to the Constellation and then to Portland, Me. — Takes command of the naval force on Lake Champlain — Operations in the Fall of 1812 — The year 1813 on the lake — Preparations in the Spring of 1814 — The engagement of September 11, 1814 — Criticizes the Eagle for shifting her position during the action — Directed to command the navy yard at

CONTENTS

	PAGE
Portsmouth, N. H. — Ordered to the <i>Guerrière</i> — Conveys our Minister to Russia and then joins the Mediterranean squadron — Relieved of his com- mand by order of Commodore Stewart — Returns to the United States — Directed to resume command of the <i>Guerrière</i> — Declines and is given the <i>Ohio</i> 74 — Returns to Middletown — Journeys through the state of New York and down the St. Lawrence River to Quebec	20

CHAPTER III

1785-1801

Condition of the navy at close of the Revolution — Algiers preys on our commerce — The birth of a new navy — Peace with Algiers — Trouble with France — Navy increased — Hostilities with France — Our naval force in 1800 — Macdonough's youth — Influences which governed his choice of a profes- sion — A midshipman's life — His ration, uniform and prize money — Peace with France — Naval peace establishment	33
--	----

CHAPTER IV

1801-1803

Our relations with the Barbary Powers — A squadron of observation sent to the Mediterranean — A second squadron sent to the same sea — Macdonough's cruise in the <i>Constellation</i> — His first encounter with the Tripolitans	47
---	----

CHAPTER V

1803-1804

Light vessels built for use before Tripoli — Commo- dore Preble ordered to the Mediterranean — His force — Macdonough ordered to the <i>Philadelphia</i> — Arrival at Gibraltar — Capture of the Moorish vessel	
--	--

CONTENTS

PAGE

Meshboha — Macdonough placed on board the prize — Commodore Preble arrives at Gibraltar — Proceeds to Tangiers — The Meshboha ordered to Tangiers and released — Three of the Philadelphia's men desert from the Moorish prize while lying at Gibraltar — Midshipmen Morris and Macdonough sent on shore to get them — Experience of the two American officers on board the English frigate Medusa — Macdonough joins the Constitution — Learns of the loss of the Philadelphia — Is transferred to the Enterprise — Beginning of friendship with Decatur — Commodore Preble reconnoitres Tripoli — Result of his observations — The Philadelphia — Plans for her destruction — The Intrepid sails from Syracuse and arrives off Tripoli — Attack delayed by gale — Decatur enters the harbor and sets fire to the prize — Destruction of the Philadelphia and escape of the Intrepid 58

CHAPTER VI

1804-1806

Incident at Messina — Operations before Tripoli — Macdonough wins his commission — Sad fate of the Intrepid — Commodore Preble superseded by Commodore Barron — Peace with Tripoli — Macdonough joins the Siren — Returns to the United States . . 72

CHAPTER VII

1806-1812

Condition of the navy following the War with Tripoli — Macdonough visits his home in Delaware — Ordered to Middletown, Ct., under Captain Hull — Ordered to the Wasp — Joins the John Adams and then the Essex — Takes charge of gunboats in Connecticut and Long Island — Furloughed to make voyage in merchant service — Correspondence with Secretary

CONTENTS

	PAGE
of the Navy regarding another furlough — Confirmed by Bishop Chase — War declared against Great Britain — Applies for service — Ordered to the Constellation — Takes command of gunboats at Portland, Me. — Letter from Captain Bainbridge — Ordered to command the naval force on Lake Champlain	87

CHAPTER VIII

1812-1813

Lake Champlain — Its early wars — Difficulties encountered by our lake commanders — American naval force on Lake Champlain at beginning of the war — Macdonough prepares it for service — Supports General Dearborn in movement to the north — Goes into winter quarters at Shelburne, Vt. — His marriage — Enters the lake in Spring of 1813 — Loss of the Growler and Eagle — Report of Sailing Master Loomis, commanding the Eagle — Macdonough directed to regain ascendancy on the lake — Prepares another force at Burlington — The British land at Plattsburg and threaten Burlington — American force re-enters the lake — Macdonough declines to co-operate in a joint attack on Isle aux Noix — Supports General Hampton in his attempted invasion of Canada — Goes into winter quarters at Vergennes, Vt.	106
--	-----

CHAPTER IX

1814

Vergennes as a naval base — British lay down a brig at Isle aux Noix — Battery at Rouse's Point contemplated — Reports concerning increase in enemy's naval strength — The Saratoga launched at Vergennes — Apprehended appearance of British on the lake — Vermont militia called out — Battery erected
--

CONTENTS

	PAGE
at mouth of Otter Creek — Enemy enter the lake — Attack on Otter Creek battery repulsed — The American force — Difficulty in fitting it out and manning it — Good wishes from Perry and Hull — Our squadron enters the lake — British build a ship and we build a brig — Enemy blockaded in Riche- lieu River — Exchange of courtesies between Mac- donough and Captain Fisher, R. N. — Mr. Dulles describes his visit to the Saratoga as the Commodore's guest	134

CHAPTER X

1814

British prepare to invade New York — American plans to repel invasion — Control of the lake the key to the situation — British advance by land and water — American gunboats in skirmish at Dead Creek — British army on north bank of Saranac River — Commodore Downie proceeds up the lake — Ameri- can naval force — British naval force — Macdon- ough's preparations for receiving attack	157
---	-----

CHAPTER XI

1814

Action of September 11 — Defeat of the British squad- ron — The losses on both sides — British wounded removed to Crab Island — Burial of American and British officers with honors of war — Letters of English officers to Macdonough — His criticism of the Eagle's action in leaving her station during the engagement — Rewards to the victors — Charges against Prevost — Macdonough's toast	176
--	-----

CHAPTER XII

1814-1815

Prevost's retreat — Most of the American squadron sent to Whitehall — Macdonough obtains permission	
--	--

CONTENTS

	PAGE
to leave the lake — Turns over command of the squadron to Lieutenant Budd — Macdonough's work on Lake Champlain — Farewell letter from officers of the squadron — His reply — Letters to De Witt Clinton, Governor Tompkins, and Governor Chitten- den — Presented with the freedom of the city of Albany — Arrives at Middletown — Naval ball in his honor — Ordered to the steam frigate Fulton First at New York — Made a freeman of the city of New York	199

CHAPTER XIII

1815-1820

Rumors of attack on vessels at Whitehall — Macdon- ough ordered to Lake Champlain to observe situation — His report to Secretary of the Navy — Expresses hope that he will not be placed in command on Lake Champlain again — Is retained there, however, until close of war — Peace is declared — Visits his home in Delaware — Ordered to Portsmouth navy yard — His failing health — Is presented with sword by state of New York — Ordered to the <i>Guerrière</i> at Boston — Sails for Russia with the American Minister — Incidents of the voyage — Arrives in the Mediter- ranean from Cronstadt — Cruises with the squadron under Commodore Stewart — Relieved of his com- mand by order of the commander-in-chief — Reasons therefor — Ordered to the United States	218
---	-----

CHAPTER XIV

1820-1825

Members of the Sloane court martial acknowledge their error — Macdonough ordered to resume com- mand of the <i>Guerrière</i> — Declines on account of his health and is given the <i>Ohio</i> 74 — Presented by Con- necticut with pair of gold mounted pistols — Visits Vermont and Lake Champlain — Receives gold	
--	--

CONTENTS

	PAGE
mounted sword from crew of the <i>Guerrière</i> — His family — Ordered to the <i>Constitution</i> at New York — Sails for the Mediterranean and assumes command of the American squadron in those waters — Superseded by Commodore Rodgers — Death of his wife — Relieved of the command of the <i>Constitution</i> at his own request and sails for the United States — His death at sea — Letter from Dr. Turk describing the Commodore's last hours — Funeral ceremonies at New York — Taken to Middletown and buried with military honors beside his wife	241

CHAPTER XV

Macdonough's death in the prime of life — His personal appearance — A Federalist in politics — A glimpse of his private life — A valuable citizen, a consistent Christian, an able officer	257
--	-----

APPENDIX

A

The opinion of the court of inquiry on the loss of the <i>Growler</i> and <i>Eagle</i> June 3, 1813	265
---	-----

B

Report relating to the battle on Lake Champlain September 11, 1814, received from Commodore Macdonough and transmitted by the Secretary of the Navy to the Chairman of the Senate Naval Committee	265
---	-----

C

Other documents relating to the battle on Lake Champlain September 11, 1814	279
---	-----

D

Statement of the force and loss on board the British and American squadrons in the action of September 11, 1814, taken from the Burlington (Vt.) Centinel . . .	285
---	-----

CONTENTS

PAGE

E

- Letter from Sir James Lucas Yeo to J. W. Croker
transmitting the report of Captain Daniel Pring
concerning the engagement of September 11, 1814 . . . 286

F

- Verdict of the court martial on the commanding officers
of the British squadron 291

G

- Charges preferred by Sir James Lucas Yeo against Sir
George Prevost 293

H

- Letter from Midshipman Lea, of the *Confiance*, to his
brother 293

I

- Letter from Andrew William Cochran, Acting Deputy
Judge Advocate to the British forces, to Macdonough, 295

J

- Letter from Macdonough to Andrew William Cochran, 296

K

- Correspondence between Cadwallader R. Colden and
Macdonough 296

L

- Resolution of Congress in connection with the victory
on Lake Champlain September 11, 1814 299

-
- Index of Persons 303

- Index of Places 311

ILLUSTRATIONS

	FACING PAGE
Commodore Thomas Macdonough, U. S. Navy (from the portrait by Gilbert Stuart)	Frontispiece ✓
Macdonough's birthplace at the Trap, Del.	38 ✓
Plan of the harbor and defenses of Tripoli	65 -
Macdonough when about twenty-two years of age (from a portrait supposed to have been painted in Italy) . .	84 ✓
Map of Lake Champlain	106 ✓
Macdonough in 1814 (from a miniature painted in that year)	138 ✓
The Commodore's pencil sketch (slightly reduced) of the positions of the British and American squadrons before and during the action of September 11, 1814	173 ✓
Diagram showing the British and American batteries at Plattsburg, and the positions assumed by the vessels of the two squadrons during the engagement of September 11, 1814	174 ✓
Photograph of Macdonough's despatch to the Secretary of the Navy announcing the victory over the British squadron on Lake Champlain, September 11, 1814 .	185 ✓
The obverse and reverse of the gold medal presented by Congress to Commodore Macdonough	193 ✓
The battle of Lake Champlain, September 11, 1814 (from Davidson's painting)	197 ✓
U. S. Frigate Constitution (from the painting by Marshall Johnson)	248 ✓
Monument over the graves of Commodore Macdonough and his wife in Riverside Cemetery, Middletown, Conn.,	255

CHAPTER I

Macdonough's ancestors — Thomas, of county Kildare, Ireland — James, the emigrant, — Thomas, the Revolutionary soldier — The family home in Delaware.

BEFORE taking up the life of Commodore Macdonough it will not be inappropriate to devote a few words to the sturdy stock from which he sprung and to which he was indebted for some of the qualities which rendered him conspicuous in youth and manhood, for his character, while no doubt moulded to some extent by his environment, bore the unmistakable imprint of transmitted virtues.

Thomas MacDonough*, Commodore Macdonough's great-grandfather, is the first of the line of whom anything definite is known. He lived in the district known as Salmon Leap, about twelve miles from Dublin on the river Liffey, county Kildare, Ireland. He was a member of the clan Donchada (anglicized MacDonough), whose ancestor was Donoch, brother of Cormac, Lord of Moylurg. His wife was Jane Coyle. The family was of the Protestant faith and the succeeding generations have been actively connected with the Episcopal Church in America. Three sons, John, Augustin and James McDonough*, the last the Commodore's grandfather, came to this country about 1730. John settled at Newtown, Long Island, and left numerous descendants. Augustin went to the West Indies.

* The form of the name used by him.

James, the ancestor of the Delaware line, settled at what was then called the Trap, St. George's Hundred, New Castle county, Delaware. The many references to him in the records of the office of the Register of Deeds at Wilmington testify to his activity and business ability, and his will, in which he refers to generous gifts already made to his then living sons and provides for the maintenance and education of his two orphan grandchildren, James and Joseph Anderson, is a silent witness to his parental love and forethought and his sense of the obligations of kinship.

James was a man of considerable means, and if, as family tradition says, he was a physician, he must have possessed a superior education and no doubt occupied a position of importance in the community. He was a man of fine character and of strong convictions. His brother John, who settled in Newtown, Long Island, was an active member of the Episcopal Church in that place, and were the early records of St. Ann's in Middletown, near the Trap, extant, they would probably show that James was a member of that ancient Episcopal parish.

His life covered a period of intense interest in the history of our country. He was no doubt familiar with the course of political events, and from his quiet home in Delaware had watched the gathering of the storm which was to break over the devoted colonies. When it burst in 1776 he was weak in arm but strong in his belief in the principles of liberty, justice and equality upheld by his adopted country. Unable himself through age to take an active part in the contest, he armed two of his sons, Thomas and James, and sent

them to the front. Thomas returned to him after a period of honorable service but James died early in the war.

The sturdy old man more than rounded out his allotted three score years and ten, for he did not die until 1792, when eighty years old. He had married, in 1746, Lydia, eldest daughter of Peter Laroux, a Huguenot, or of Huguenot extraction, also of St. George's Hundred. She was born in 1729 and died August 21, 1764. They had seven children — Thomas (born 1747), Bridget, John, James, Patrick, Mary and Micah. The eldest of these, Thomas McDonough*, the father of the Commodore, was educated as a physician. His practice was in and about his native place, the Trap, and he followed his profession until the outbreak of the Revolution, when, inspired by patriotic feelings, he threw away the lancet and buckled on the sword.

When the Revolution broke out the state of Delaware raised and placed in the field a battalion of eight hundred men under command of Colonel John Haslet. This battalion was composed of state troops in Continental service — that is, troops organized under the colonial laws and furnished by the state of Delaware upon the call of Congress, who appointed their field officers. John Macpherson was elected major of the battalion January 19, 1776, but he was not then living, having been killed in the storming of Quebec in December, 1775. The intelligence of his death did not reach Delaware, however, until March, 1776, and on hearing of it the General Assembly passed the following:

* The form of the name used by him.

WEDNESDAY P.M., March 20, 1776.

On motion made, resolved, that Dr. Thomas McDonough, of the county of New Castle, be, and he is hereby, recommended to the honourable the Continental Congress as major in the Delaware battalion vice John Macpherson, Jun., Esq., deceased.

Under date of Friday, March 22, 1776, the following entry appears in the journal of the Continental Congress:

The Assembly of the counties on Delaware having recommended a gentleman to be a major in the battalion ordered to be raised in that colony in the room of John Macpherson, Jun'r Esq'r, who fell before Quebec and never received his commission, the Congress proceeded to the election and the ballots being taken and examined, Thomas McDonough was elected.

Major McDonough at once joined his command, which was in camp at Dover, and prepared for active duty. During the months of May and June he was stationed at Lewes, Delaware, with a detachment of about two hundred men to prevent an uprising among the Tories in Sussex county. Early in July he rejoined the battalion at Wilmington and served with the colors until after November 4, 1776, commanding the battalion in person in the battle of Long Island, August 27, with such conspicuous gallantry as to merit the flattering approbation of General Washington, and participating in the battle of White Plains, October 28. Soon after this engagement he returned to his home in Delaware, a wound received in the battle of Long Island incapacitating him for active duty with the battalion during its last two months of service. The battalion was disbanded in January, 1777, and Major McDonough received an honorable discharge.

The civil government of Delaware from 1776 to 1792 consisted of a President, a Privy Council and a General Assembly. The last was composed of two bodies, a lower house called the Assembly and an upper house called the Council. The former was made up of seven and the latter of three delegates from each of the three counties of New Castle, Kent and Sussex. The Privy Council was composed of four members, two of whom were chosen by the Assembly and two by the Council, each for a term of two years. Its duties appear to have been to advise with the President in relation to embodying the militia, calling special meetings of the General Assembly, making appointments to certain offices and in filling vacancies in others until a new election.

In the latter part of 1776 and the early part of 1777 a battalion was being raised in Delaware in response to a call of Congress. The command of this force was offered to Major McDonough, but on February 22, 1777, the Assembly notified the Council that he did not see his way clear to accept the honor proffered him. The Council, however, anxious to secure his services in a civil if not in a military capacity, elected him the same day a member of the Privy Council. With him was elected Mr. George Latimer, and they were members of the first Privy Council under the state constitution of 1776.

He served in the Privy Council for the full term of two years. During the last year of his term he was brought, by virtue of his position as Privy Councillor, into close personal relationship with Cæsar Rodney, who was elected President of the Delaware State

March 31, 1778. The exigencies of the times had probably brought these two together before. Cæsar Rodney's nephew, Cæsar Augustus Rodney, was also a friend of both the Major and his son Thomas (the Commodore), and the latter writes of him in 1802 as "C. A. Rodney, Esq., my father's and my friend."

On October 2, 1780, Major McDonough was elected a member of the Council for three years and served the full term. On October 1, 1783, he was again elected and served a like term. On October 25, 1784, he was unanimously elected Speaker of the Council to succeed Cæsar Rodney and served as such for two years, until the expiration of the term for which he had been elected a member of the Council. He was apparently not in public life the next year, but on October 1, 1787, he was again elected a member of the Council and was unanimously chosen Speaker when the Council assembled on October 25 of that year. He served as Speaker until the end of the session in June, 1788, when he resigned from the Council to fill the position of third Justice of the Court of Common Pleas and Orphans' Court of New Castle county, to which he had been elected February 2, 1788.

As a member of the Council he was constant in his attendance at its sessions, assiduous in his attention to public duty and unremitting in his endeavors to promote the success of the struggling colonies and the welfare of his native state.

On January 9, 1791, he was elected second Justice of the Court of Common Pleas and Orphans' Court, and on September 6, 1793, he was appointed by Governor Clayton one of the Justices of the Court of Common Pleas.

Although he was unable to accept a second commission in the Continental service, he still found an opportunity of serving his state by accepting the command of the Seventh Regiment, Delaware militia, of which he was colonel in 1779 and 1782. Were the records complete, they would probably show that he was in command of the regiment during the intervening years. Delaware, as did other states, raised militia regiments for duty within the state during the war, but, as these forces were not a part of the Continental army, their services do not form a part of the government records although the local militia regiments frequently co-operated within their own state with the regulars, and, in some cases, participated in actual engagements with the enemy. As early as January, 1775, companies were formed throughout the (then) colony of Delaware for local protection, and in September, 1775, the Council of Safety organized the companies of the several counties into nine battalions, or regiments, and these into three brigades, the total strength being about five thousand. This organization for state defense was continued throughout the war.

Reference has been made to St. Ann's Church at Middletown, six miles from the Trap. Its records are very incomplete, being continuous only from 1808, with a few fragmentary records covering the years 1791 to 1795. They show, however, that Major McDonough was one of the wardens in 1793 and 1794.

From the time of his marriage in 1770 until after the birth of his son Thomas (the Commodore) in 1783, the Major lived about three-quarters of a mile south of the Trap on the west side of the road from Odessa just

after it crosses Drawyers Creek. The house was small, but one story and a half high, built of logs and weather boarded. Here six of his children were born. In 1784 he built a house on land owned by his father at the Trap and lived there until his death in 1795.

This house was built of bricks brought from England and is still standing on what is known as the "Trap farm," as solid and substantial now as the day it was erected. It stands at the top of a gentle rise, with a fine view of the surrounding country. In front is a small, neatly kept lawn, and within are the old fashioned door latches, the quaint chimney cupboards, the carved mantels and the generous fireplaces which testify to the warmth of the hospitality of the old colonial times. Here the future hero of Lake Champlain spent his boyhood days. Here, amid the surroundings of a happy home and under the most salutary influences, began the harmonious development of mind, brain and body which produced such splendid results in later years.

Major McDonough died a comparatively young man November 10, 1795, after a useful and honorable life. His profession gave him a standing in the community, and his education, soundness of judgment and mental attainments made him a prominent figure in the public affairs of the day. His wife, who is described by a writer of that time as an "engaging and accomplished woman who inspired with respect all who approached her", and whom he married in 1770, was the daughter of Samuel Vance, also of St. George's Hundred, who was the son of John Vance, of English origin and a captain in the Delaware colonial militia. She was born

in 1751 and died November 1, 1792. Their children were Lydia, Hannah, James, Mary, Hester, Thomas (the Commodore, born December 31, 1783), Samuel, Jane, John and Joseph.

CHAPTER II

COMMODORE MACDONOUGH'S AUTOBIOGRAPHY*

1800-1822

Enters the navy — War with France — Joins the *Ganges* — Cruise to the West Indies against the French — War with Tripoli — Ordered to the *Constellation* — Cruise in the Mediterranean — Returns to the United States and is ordered to the *Philadelphia* for Mediterranean service — Providential escape from the fate of the officers and crew of the *Philadelphia* — Joins the *Enterprise* — Participates in the burning of the *Philadelphia* and in the operations before Tripoli — Peace with Tripoli — Returns to the United States — Ordered to Middletown, Ct. — Attached to various vessels — Voyage in the merchant service — War with England — Ordered to the *Constellation* and then to Portland, Me. — Takes command of the naval force on Lake Champlain — Operations in the Fall of 1812 — The year 1813 on the lake — Preparations in the Spring of 1814 — The engagement of September 11, 1814 — Criticizes the *Eagle* for shifting her position during the action — Directed to command the navy yard at Portsmouth, N. H. — Ordered to the *Guerrière* — Conveys our Minister to Russia and then joins the Mediterranean squadron — Relieved of his command by order of Commodore Stewart — Returns to the United States — Directed to resume command of the *Guerrière* — Declines and is given the *Ohio* 74 — Returns to Middletown — Journeys through the state of New York and down the St. Lawrence River to Quebec.

“ On the 5th February, 1800, I received a warrant as midshipman in the navy (I was then 16 years old) of the United States from John Adams, then President, through the influence of Mr. Latimer, a senator from the state of Delaware. Soon after my appointment I joined the U. S. ship *Ganges* †, Captain Muldowney, at

* The Commodore's autobiography covers the period from his entrance into the navy in 1800 to the close of the year 1822. It is concisely written and in keeping with the modest and unassuming character of the man. It relates entirely to his naval career and does not touch upon his private life. Only such notes have been added as will serve to explain the text. The original is in his own hand and is written (with perhaps unconscious appropriateness) in an ordinary log book or journal.

† He was ordered to the *Ganges* May 15, 1800, and remained on her until May, 1801. — AUTHOR.

New Castle* and proceeded on a cruise in the West Indies † against the French with whom the U. States were at war. On this cruise we captured two Guineamen and a French privateer ‡ and sent them to the United States. The privateer was run on shore. After considerable firing on her, her crew deserted her and got on shore. She was boarded by our boats; on board of one I was.

“ About this time the yellow fever made its appearance on board and many of the men and officers fell victims, after a few hours illness, to its destructive ravages. Several midshipmen and myself, with a number of men, having caught this fever were sent on shore at the Havanna and put into a dirty Spanish hospital. Nearly all of the men and officers died and were taken out in carts as so many hogs would have been. A midshipman, a surgeon's mate and myself, through the blessing of divine providence, recovered and took passage for the U. States, destitute of all the comforts and even conveniences of life. The consul§, however, supplied us with shirts and some other articles of clothing. Off the capes of Delaware we were captured by an English ship of war on account of our vessel (a merchantman belonging to Phila.) having Spanish property on board. I, with the other gentlemen, were put on board the ———, an American ship, and landed at Norfolk, Virginia.

“ There the consul supplied us with money &c. to enable us to join the Ganges, which ship had left the

* New Castle, Delaware. — AUTHOR.

† The Ganges was ordered to St. Domingo May 24, 1800. — AUTHOR.

‡ La Fortune. — AUTHOR.

§ John Morton, of New York. — AUTHOR.

Havanna on account of the fever which raged on board of her and with difficulty reached the U. States with the loss of many men and officers. Took passage on board the ferry boat, crossed the Chesapeake Bay and travelling up through the country got out of the stage at the Trap, my native place, after an absence of nearly a year, with straw hat, canvas shoes and in other respects poor enough. My relatives and friends were much surprised to see me as my death was, if not published, it was stated that I could not recover.

“ I remained some short time at the Trap; then joined the *Ganges* again. Took a short cruise in the West Indies* and returned to Phila., where the ship was sold and the navy, by law, reduced, and almost all the officers dismissed. Through the influence of C. A. Rodney Esq.,† my father’s and my friend, I was continued.

“ When I quitted the ship *Ganges* I joined the frigate *Constellation*, Commodore Murray, and sailed for the Mediterranean, where we remained for about twelve months. Visited many ports in that sea and had a brush with the gunboats off Tripoli.

“ In 1803 I joined the frigate *Philadelphia*, as one of her midshipmen, bound for service in the Mediterranean sea. Soon after our arrival in that sea we captured a Moorish vessel ‡ of 30 guns without resistance and I was put on board to assist in taking her to Gibraltar. The U. S. were at this time at war with the

* The *Ganges* sailed January 26, 1801, to cruise a few months in the West Indies for the protection of our trade. — AUTHOR.

† Cæsar Augustus Rodney, of Delaware, son of Thomas Rodney and nephew of Cæsar Rodney. — AUTHOR.

‡ The *Meshboha*, taken August 26, 1803. — AUTHOR.

Regency of Tripoli and not with the Moors, though the latter had commenced depredations on our commerce. I was left by the *Philadelphia*, Captain Bainbridge, on board the Moorish ship at Gibraltar and she went up the Mediterranean to cruise off Tripoli, where she was lost by running on shore in chase and was taken possession of by the enemy, the officers and men put into close confinement and kept there for 19 months. Thus was I providentially saved from this prison and the apprehension of death which surrounded those of my shipmates in the power of a merciless foe.

“ About this time Commodore Preble came out * and took the command of the squadron, under whom, a daring and vigilant officer, may be considered the first impulse given to the navy in his conduct before Tripoli. He took his squadron to Tangier, had negotiations opened with the Emperor of Morocco, and coming to an arrangement of the difficulties the prize ship was given up. I then quitted her, not caring to be in his Majesty’s service, and joined the commodore’s ship as passenger until we met with the *Philadelphia*, but on our passage up we spoke a British frigate who informed us of her loss as stated.

“ I then, in the harbour of Syracuse, joined the schooner *Enterprise*, Lieutenant Stephen Decatur, commander. Was with him when the frigate *Philadelphia* was burned in the harbour of Tripoli and when he captured, by boarding, the gunboats in one of the actions with the enemy’s vessels and batteries.

“ Here I consider was the school where our navy received its first lessons, and its influence has remained

* Commodore Preble reached Gibraltar September 12, 1803. — AUTHOR.

to this day and will continue as long as the navy exists. I remained in the squadron during all its operations against Tripoli, presented the flags of the captured boats to Com. Preble at the request of Capt. Decatur, and was in 1805 or 6 appointed by the commodore a lieutenant of the schooner *Enterprise*.

“ Captain Robinson now took the command of this vessel and sailed up the Adriatic to Trieste, thence to Venice, where she was hauled up in the arsenal and repaired. Passed the winter of, I think, 1805 in Venice. From Venice I went to Ancona and prepared four small vessels for gunboats to be employed against Tripoli. Thence sailed to Syracuse and joined the squadron with the boats. On our arrival at Syracuse found peace had been made with Tripoli. Joined the schooner, Capt. David Porter as commander. Soon after I exchanged my station as first lieutenant of the *Enterprise* for the first lieutenantcy of the U. States brig *Syren*, Capt. John Smith, with Lieutenant Warrington.

“ Having now not much to do, visited many of the interesting ports and places along the shores of this sea. From Naples I went to Rome by land, visited Pompeii, Herculaneum, Mount *Ætna*, Malta and the towns of the Barbary Powers and returned to the United States, where I remained some two or three years.

“ When I was first lieutenant of the *Syren* brig an occurrence took place in the harbour of Gibraltar which excited a good deal of feeling both on the side of the English and ourselves. A British man-of-war's boat boarded an American merchantman which lay near the *Syren* and took out, or impressed, one of her men.

I went alongside the British boat in one of ours and demanded him, which demand was refused. I then took hold of the man and took him in my boat and brought him on board the Syren. He was an American and of course we kept him.

“ Was ordered by the Department to attend the building of some gunboats at this place*, which was the first of my coming and of course my acquaintance here. Joined the ship Wasp with my old commander Capt. Smith as first lieutenant and went to England with despatches, thence to France with the same and thence to the Mediterranean, where we stayed a few months and returned home. Cruised along the coast from Boston to Charleston enforcing the embargo laws. From the Wasp I went to the ship John Adams at Washington but soon left her and joined the frigate Essex as first with Capt. Smith.

“ Shortly after left the Essex and procured a furlough with a view of going on a voyage in the merchant service. At this time the navy was unpopular and many officers quitted it. I sailed from New York as captain of the brig Gulliver to Liverpool, thence to Calcutta and home again, touching at the island of St. Helena and being absent from the U. States about 15 months. On the passage from England to Calcutta I touched at the island of Madeira for supplies and refreshments and ran down close in with the islands of Teneriffe, the Canaries and Cape DeVerde. On my return from my India voyage I took charge of a merchant ship from New York and sailed for Lisbon, but the vessel springing aleak in a gale when out a few days,

* Middletown, Ct. — AUTHOR.

I was compelled from this circumstance to return to New York. The non-intercourse law now taking place, I of course could not prosecute the voyage and quitted the ship. During the gale I was obliged to throw overboard part of the cargo.

“ War having now been declared against Great Britain by the United States *, I applied for service and received orders to repair to Washington and join the frigate *Constellation* as first lieutenant. I did not remain long on board this ship for it required some time to complete her repairs and the time was irksome there. I therefore applied for and obtained command of the *Portland* station where were several fine gunboats. After remaining a few months at *Portland* I was ordered by Mr. Madison to take the command of the vessels on *Lake Champlain*. Proceeded thither across the country through the notch of the *White Mountains*, partly on horseback, carrying my bundle with a valise on behind and a country lad only in company to return with my horses. I arrived fatigued at *Burlington* on the lake in about four days and took command of the vessels after waiting on the commanding general, *Bloomfield*.

“ The naval force on this lake consisted at this time of two gunboats and three sloops, the whole totally unprepared. Went to *Whitehall* and commenced fitting out these vessels. All hands (including myself, a midshipman, *Joseph Smith*, and a master’s mate named *Trumbull*) employed in this business. After all the difficulties to be expected in such a part of the country where nobody knew anything that was necessary to be done, I succeeded in getting these vessels

* War was declared June 18, 1812. — AUTHOR.

in a poor kind of order to lead the army down to Canada from Plattsburg. The season was advanced, the army returned to winter quarters, and my poor forlorn looking squadron went into winter quarters at Shelburne.

“ In the winter of 1812 I received orders from the Navy Department to prepare the squadron on Lake Champlain in a more efficient manner. Accordingly on the opening of the lake the following Spring I entered it with three sloops and two gunboats, in all about thirty-five guns, and employed this force in maintaining the peace of the lake by keeping within their own waters the vessels of the enemy and keeping the army free from molestation by water and the navigation clear to our merchants until I had the misfortune to lose two of the sloops through, I may say, the imprudence of Lieutenant Sidney Smith, who, while I was repairing a leak in the vessel that I sailed in myself, was ordered by me toward the lines to keep the enemy's boats &c. from coming into our waters, thereby annoying the small craft on the lake. Lt. Smith ventured in quest of the enemy over the lines in sight of the Isle aux Noix, a strongly fortified place of the British, where he was captured by the gunboats of the enemy. He fought under great disadvantage for the passage was narrow and the current so strong as to make it totally impossible to manage his vessels. He went there without orders and contrary to my intentions and advice.

“ The British, thus fortunate in gaining the ascendancy on the lake, came out toward the close of the campaign and took all the craft within their reach, which, however, did not amount to more than two or

three boats belonging to the merchants. They came off Burlington, where I was preparing another force, when a sharp cannonade commenced and continued about half an hour between our gunboats, the battery of the army and their vessels. In this rencontre I believe not much damage if any was done on either side. Soon after this, having equipped my vessels, I entered again the lake with three sloops and four gunboats, two of which boats I had built since the loss of the Growler and Eagle under Lt. Smith. On my appearing on the lake the British retired to their stronghold, the Isle aux Noix, where they remained during the remainder of the season, leaving us the quiet possession of the lake. In the fore part of the winter I went into winter quarters at Vergennes.

“ Both sides now began vigorous exertions for the command of the lake in the following Spring. Various reports reached me of their preparations — that the keel of a large vessel had been laid and a number of large gunboats or galleys were also constructing. On our side, as I had directions at all hazards to maintain our ascendancy, we were not idle. The keel of a ship was laid at Vergennes to mount 26 guns, also the keels of 6 large galleys, the latter to be 75 feet long and 15 feet wide. Went down to Albany and New York to arrange and forward the articles and supplies for this force. In the meantime rendezvous were opened along on the seaboard at the different large places and all the necessary artificers sent to the lake from New York, from whence the guns and heavy articles were sent, though we had transported from Boston the sheet anchor of the Saratoga which weighed 3,000 pounds.

Everything on both sides went on with all the dispatch which it was possible to apply.

“ The British entered the lake before us in the Spring and attempted the obstruction of the mouth of Otter Creek, so that my vessels might be kept from entering the lake. As I had information of their intentions I erected a battery at the mouth of the Otter Creek or River and called in the assistance of Col. Davis’ regiment and a company of artillery under Capt. Thornton, and this force, together with a body of our sailors under Lt. Stephen Cassin, kept the mouth of the river open. The British came off this place with their brig, sloop and several galleys, and after a short cannonading, having sustained some injury, retired within their own waters.*

“ Soon after I entered the lake with the *Saratoga*, my ship, the *Ticonderoga*, three sloops and six galleys and proceeded to the lines in blockade of the enemy, where we continued until a few days previous to the action on the 11th September, 1814. The issue of this battle is well known. The enemy’s fleet was either taken or driven down to the *Isle aux Noix* in Canada. The army, which had been for some days before the town of *Plattsburg*, made a precipitate and disorderly retreat, destroying things of their own which, through less haste or fear of the increasing numbers of our militia and of desertions of their own troops, might have been taken with them. Our men, it seems hardly necessary to say, fought with that ardour and enthusiasm which might be expected when opposed by a foe so superior in numbers and weight of metal and so far

* This attack was made on May 14, 1814. — AUTHOR.

in our country, carrying destruction before them wherever they went.

“ The *Saratoga* lost many of her men. The *Ticonderoga* behaved with much gallantry. The *Eagle*, Capt. Henley, quitted the station assigned her and took another where she kept up her fire upon the enemy. As regards this act of this vessel I am decidedly of opinion her duty was to remain in the station assigned her as long as it was possible for her to maintain it. Her list of killed and wounded would show what necessity she was under to change her station, and even that evidence of her disability was made up of the names of wounded men, in part, who had only been so scratched or slightly hurt as not to merit the name of wounded, among whom was Lt. Spencer, who had a bit of skin by some means torn off his face. Mr. Loomis (I believe acting master) earnestly requested that his name should not appear among the wounded. Had the *Saratoga* been beaten, as, during the latter part of the action she had the fire of the brig which had been opposed to the *Eagle* upon her, as well as that of the *Confiance*, the day in all human probability would have fallen to the enemy. The smaller vessels did their duty.

“ In the course of the ensuing winter I was relieved in command of the lake and was directed to command the steam frigate in New York harbour, but peace taking place about this time, I went to Washington and procured orders to the navy yard at Portsmouth, N. H. In the winter of 1816 was appointed one of a board of commissioners, one of whom was Gen'l Bernard, to select sites for fortifications on the Plattsburg frontier. In 1818 was appointed to command the

Guerrière frigate and took out the Hon. G. W. Campbell to the Court of St. Petersburg, Russia, touching in England, Elsinour and Copenhagen.

“ From St. Petersburg, where we remained about 15 days, we went to the Mediterranean, not through the English Channel but around the Shetland Islands in latitude nearly 62° . This was in the month of October. After a tedious passage arrived at Gibraltar, watered, took in some provisions and joined the squadron in the harbour of Syracuse. Visited various ports in the Mediterranean. Being at peace with the Barbary Powers we had not much else to do but run about. At Naples was presented to the Emperor of Austria, Francis II, and also Ferdinand, King of Naples, on board the U. States ship of the line Franklin, which ship these sovereigns visited.

“ Some short time after this a difference of opinion arose between the commodore, Stewart, and a court martial, of which court I was president. A correspondence took place. The court asserted its rights with such warmth that the commodore, conceiving his office and himself personally reflected upon, suspended the whole court and reported the affair to the government, by whose order we were all recalled to the United States, where, on a representation being made to the President, viz., that the court had acted from a conviction that it was doing its duty and not intending any personality in relation to the commodore, and that, upon having received the best legal opinion which the country afforded, it was sensible the grounds on which it acted were erroneous, viz., that it was independent of and without the control of the commodore — upon

this expression, I say, of the members of the court to the President, they were directed to resume their commands, or at least I was ordered to the Mediterranean to take again the *Guerrière*, but my health continuing not good I declined, upon which I was ordered to the command of the *Ohio* 74 and returned to my family in Middletown.

“ In the Fall of 1822 I took a tour through the western part of the state of New York. Visited Niagara Falls, then descended the River St. Lawrence as far as Quebec, passing all the rapids to the no small gratification of myself and those passengers who accompanied me in the batteaux.”

CHAPTER III

1785-1801

Condition of the navy at close of the Revolution — Algiers preys on our commerce — The birth of a new navy — Peace with Algiers — Trouble with France — Navy increased — Hostilities with France — Our naval force in 1800 — Macdonough's youth — Influences which governed his choice of a profession — A midshipman's life — His ration, uniform and prize money — Peace with France — Naval peace establishment.

THE close of the Revolution found the United States practically without a navy. It soon became evident, however, that some sort of a force would be necessary in order to protect our water borne commerce which was at the mercy of every foreign flag. Our defenseless condition on the sea made it possible for any Power to annoy or seize American vessels with impunity.

As early as 1785 American commerce suffered from **1785** the depredations of Algerine corsairs, the ship *Dauphin*, of Philadelphia, and the schooner *Maria*, of Boston, being captured off the coast of Portugal and their cargoes and crews carried to Algiers, where the latter were held for ransom. The war between Algiers and Portugal prevented, temporarily, the former Power from continuing its depredations, but when, in 1793, **1793** the British agent at the court of the Dey arranged a truce between Algiers and Portugal, the latter's fleet raised the blockade of the Straits and the Algerine corsairs, released from the confines of the Mediterranean, swooped down, like unhooded falcons, upon our

1793 defenseless merchantmen. In October and November of that year eleven American vessels were captured with crews aggregating 109 men.

In consequence of these outrages Congress passed, **1794** March 27, 1794, "An Act to Provide a Naval Armament", which authorized the President, George Washington, "to provide, by purchase, or otherwise equip and employ, four ships to carry forty-four guns each, and two ships to carry thirty-six guns each." It was provided, however, that if peace should take place between Algiers and the United States, no further proceedings were to be taken under this act.

Work was at once begun on six frigates — the Constitution, 44 guns, at Boston; President, 44 guns, at New York; United States, 44 guns, at Philadelphia; Chesapeake, 36 guns, at Norfolk; Congress, 36 guns, at Portsmouth, N. H.; Constellation, 36 guns, at Baltimore. This was the beginning of the navy of to-day. On June 5 Congress authorized the construction or purchase of not more than ten small vessels "to be fitted out, manned, armed and equipped, as galleys, or otherwise, in the service of the United States." A treaty of **1795** peace with Algiers was concluded September 5, 1795, and work on the six frigates was at once suspended in accordance with the act of March 27, 1794.

Great as were the annoyances inflicted on American commerce by Algiers, the acts of France, though less barbarous, were no less aggravating. "They included aggressions of privateers, indiscriminate seizures of merchantmen by French cruisers, oppressive decisions of admiralty courts, payments of contract obligations in a debased currency, unrecognized and unwarrantable

extensions of the list of contraband, delays, ill-treatment of the crews of prizes, and a variety of similar acts, by which American commerce was annoyed and harassed, its operations delayed, and its legitimate profits wasted. Each year a larger list of complaints was transmitted to Congress, and the necessity for action became more apparent." *

On April 20, 1796, Congress authorized the President, George Washington, to continue the construction and equipment, "with all convenient expedition", of two of the 44-gun and one of the 36-gun frigates on which work had been suspended on conclusion of the treaty of peace with Algiers September 5 of the previous year. Work was at once resumed on the *United States*, *Constellation* and *Constitution*, and on July 1, 1797, the President was empowered to man and employ them.

On April 27, 1798, the President, John Adams, was authorized "to cause to be built, purchased or hired, a number of vessels not exceeding twelve nor carrying more than twenty-two guns each, to be armed, fitted out and manned under his direction." To increase the efficiency of the public service, a Navy Department was created April 30 and naval affairs passed from the control of the Secretary of War. On May 4 provision was made for a number of small vessels, not exceeding ten, to be fitted out and armed as galleys.

On June 30 Congress authorized the purchase, under certain conditions, of not more than twelve additional vessels and provided for the acceptance of "any vessel armed and equipped, or suitable to be armed, of a model, size and force proper for the public service,

* Winsor's "Narrative and Critical History of America," VII, 362.

1798 which any state, body politic or corporate, citizen or citizens of the United States " might offer as a gift. The twenty-four vessels directly provided for under this act and that of April 27 were to be as nearly as possible of the following rates, viz., six not less than 32 guns each, twelve not less than 20 nor more than 24 guns each, and six not more than 18 guns each.

On July 16 \$600,000 were appropriated for the construction and equipment of three ships of not less than 32 guns each " as part of the additional naval armament authorized by law." Under this act the frigates Congress, Chesapeake and President were completed.

1799 On February 25, 1799, Congress authorized the construction of six 74-gun ships and the purchase or construction of six sloops of war of not more than 18 guns each.* The same act authorized the President to include the revenue cutters, employed in coast defense, in the naval establishment and employ them accordingly. Considerable material suitable for 74's was collected under this act, but no vessel of that rate was actually built until the passage of the act of January 2, 1813.

With each successive act of Congress the little navy had grown in strength. The first efforts to revive it met with violent opposition, but public sentiment soon changed and its development thereafter was attended by extraordinary enthusiasm.† Meanwhile Congress

1798 had passed other warlike measures. On May 28, 1798, the commanders of our armed vessels were instructed

* The day of the month, February 22, in Annals of Congress, and the year, 1798, in Goldsborough's "U. S. Naval Chronicle" (I, 113), are incorrect.

† See McMaster's "History of the People of the United States", II, 374-388.

to capture French armed vessels found hovering off our coast with inimical intent and to retake captured American vessels; on June 28 the forfeiture and condemnation, as prizes, of French armed vessels captured under the above act were authorized; on July 7 the treaties and consular convention with France were abrogated; on July 9 our commanders were authorized to capture French armed vessels wherever found and the President was empowered to grant letters of marque; and on June 13, 1798, and February 9, 1799, acts were passed suspending commercial intercourse with France and her dependencies. 1798
1799

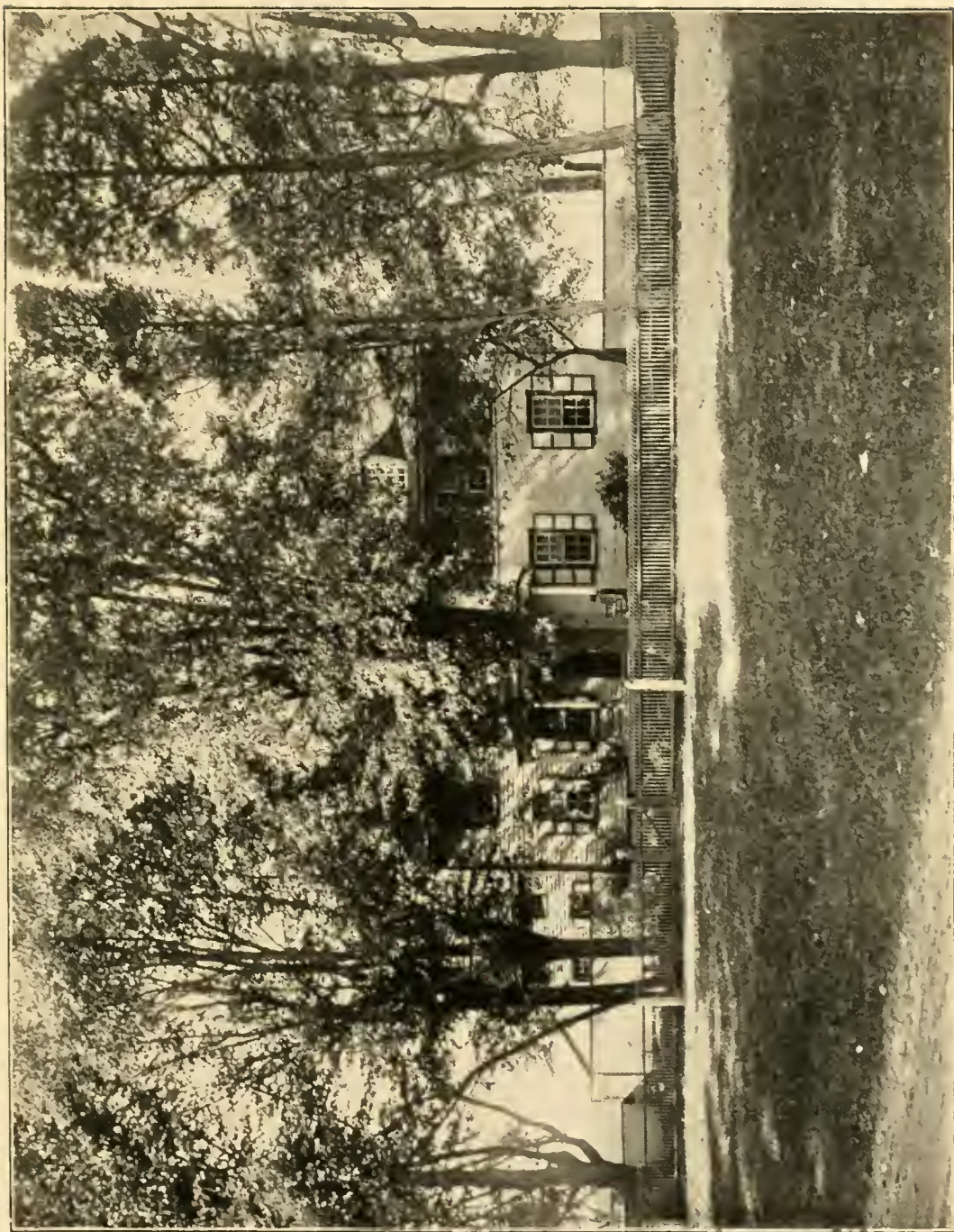
When Macdonough entered the service in February, 1800, the efficiency of the American vessels and crews had been proved in a year and a half of active operations against the French. At this time the sea going naval force of the United States comprised the following vessels: 1800

NAME	CLASS	RATE
Constitution	frigate	44
United States	frigate	44
President	frigate	44
Constellation	frigate	38
Chesapeake	frigate	38
Congress	frigate	38
Philadelphia	frigate	38
New York	frigate	36
Insurgente *	frigate	36
Essex	frigate	32
Adams	corvette	28
Boston	corvette	28
General Greene	corvette	28
John Adams	corvette	28

* Captured from the French February 9, 1799, and added to our navy.

1800	NAME	CLASS	RATE
	Portsmouth	ship	24
	Ganges	ship	24
	George Washington	ship	24
	Merrimac	ship	24
	Baltimore	ship	20
	Delaware	ship	20
	Montezuma	ship	20
	Herald	ship	18
	Norfolk	brig	18
	Pinckney	brig	18
	Richmond	brig	18
	Warren	brig	18
	Eagle	brig	14
	Pickering	brig	14
	Augusta	brig	14
	Scammel	schooner	14
	Governor Jay	schooner	14
	Virginia	schooner	14
	Diligence	schooner	12
	South Carolina	schooner	12
	Enterprise	schooner	12
	Experiment	schooner	12
	Connecticut	sloop of war	24
	Trumbull	sloop of war	24
	Maryland	sloop of war	20
	Patapsco	sloop of war	20
	General Greene	sloop of war	10

Macdonough's birthplace, the Trap (called McDonough since 1844), is probably not much larger now than it was in 1783. There, country born and bred, he passed his boyhood days, happy and contented and doing the duty that came to his hand. He always remembered with affection the home of his youth, and in a letter written from Middletown, Ct., in 1822 to his sister Lydia, in Delaware, he says, " I should like to



MACDONOUGH'S BIRTHPLACE AT THE TRAP, DEL.

visit the old home where I have spent some youthful, 1800
happy hours; to stroll about the fields and woods as I
used to do." There are many stories still current in
the neighborhood concerning the Macdonough boys,
who were full of life and spirits, fond of practical jokes
and considered by some of the neighbors a little wild.
For a few years prior to entering the navy he was a
clerk in a store in Middletown (about six miles from the
Trap), then a small cross-roads village; now a thriving
community.

As to why he entered the navy — the course was
perfectly natural in view of the influences which
surrounded him and the opportunity which was
presented.

His father had served with honor as an officer in the
Revolution, and many a time, no doubt, in the long
winter evenings, seated before the generous fireplace
filled with blazing logs, with his children around him,
had told the story of the war; told of the long and
weary march, of the camp-fire and the bivouac, the
cold, hunger and fatigue, the battle, and the gallant
deeds of gallant men for love of liberty. How the boy's
heart must have throbbed as he heard the story from
his father's lips! In the same regiment with the lad's
father was his uncle James, a gallant young officer who
died in the service of his country. His uncle Micah
had been a soldier, too, and had seen service as an
officer under General St. Clair in his ill-fated expedi-
tion against the Indians in 1791. His own brother
James was a midshipman in the navy and had taken
part in the engagement between the *Constellation* and
the *Insurgente* in 1799. He, no doubt, had often

1800 poured into the boy's willing ears the stories of the sea. These were home influences — personal and eminently calculated to arouse in any boy a longing for military glory.

Then there was a wider field which supplied the inspiration and example of patriotic lives. Though small in area, Delaware had furnished her full proportion of those who counted it a privilege to serve their country in their country's need. In the stirring times which preceded the birth of the young Republic and during the stormy days which followed, her voice was raised in the Continental Congress and her arm was bared on many a field in support of the principles for which the colonies contended. Cæsar Rodney, who, travel stained, booted and spurred, strode into the hall of Congress and cast his vote for independence; George Read, who labored early and late in the cause of liberty; John Haslet, the gallant colonel of the first force put into the field by Delaware; Robert Kirkwood, who fought with savage bravery in thirty-two battles of the Revolution; Allen McLane, the daring soldier and sturdy patriot — the names of these men were known in every hamlet in the state, and there was probably not a boy in Delaware who did not feel within himself a wish to do what they had done.

The opportunity came in the creation of a new navy, necessitated by apprehended hostilities with Algiers and by actual hostilities with France. The new commissioned officers, some of whom had seen service in the Revolutionary navy, were taken from the merchant marine; the midshipmen from private life.

With such influences surrounding him and such an opportunity offered, we can easily imagine with what eagerness and hopes of future glory the boy entered the naval service. The highest rank attainable was that of captain, and he had to pass through what he afterwards described as "a laborious and dangerous minority or apprenticeship" before securing the coveted prize. 1800

In those days our midshipmen's lines were not cast in pleasant places nor were their paths the paths of peace. Although "the wards and children of the public", as they called themselves, little or no attention seems to have been paid to their physical, mental or moral welfare. They picked up on board ship, as best they could, the technical education necessary to fit them for their profession. Although ship schoolmasters were mentioned in connection with the service, they were conspicuous by their absence. There was no exacting etiquette, no rigid courtesy. Instead, there was the rude discipline of the merchantman transferred to the deck of a man-of-war — a discipline often enforced by intemperate and abusive language and occasionally by blows. "Notwithstanding the attractions presented by a naval career", wrote Admiral Porter in his "Memoir of Commodore David Porter", "yet so great were the exactions and so unceasing the strain on a boy's nervous temperament that only the most rugged and determined could remain in the service for any length of time."

Midshipman Macdonough drew \$19 a month pay and was entitled to one ration a day, which, on Sunday, consisted of a pound and a half of beef, half a pint of

1800 rice; Monday, a pound of pork, half a pint of peas or beans, four ounces of cheese; Tuesday, a pound and a half of beef, a pound of potatoes or turnips, pudding; Wednesday, two ounces of butter or six ounces of molasses, four ounces of cheese, half a pint of rice; Thursday, a pound of pork, half a pint of peas or beans; Friday, a pound of salt fish, two ounces of butter or one gill of oil, a pound of potatoes; Saturday, a pound of pork, half a pint of peas or beans, four ounces of cheese; and every day a pound of bread with half a pint of distilled spirits or a quart of beer.* The value of this ration was twenty-eight cents. It was changed later to — Sunday, a pound and a quarter of beef, half a pound of flour, quarter of a pound of suet; Monday, a pound of pork, half a pint of peas; Tuesday, a pound of beef, two ounces of cheese; Wednesday, a pound of pork, half a pint of rice; Thursday, a pound and a quarter of beef, half a pound of flour, quarter of a pound of suet; Friday, four ounces of cheese, two ounces of butter, half a pint of rice, half a pint of molasses; Saturday, a pound of pork, half a pint of peas, half a pint of vinegar; and every day fourteen ounces of bread and half a pint of distilled spirits.† The value of this ration was twenty cents.

When he appeared in full dress uniform he wore a coat of blue cloth with short lapels faced with same and ornamented with six buttons, standing collar with a diamond formed of gold lace on each side not exceeding two inches square, slashed sleeves with small buttons, all the button-holes worked with gold thread;

* Act of Congress, July 1, 1797.

† Act of Congress, March 3, 1801.

single breasted blue vest with flaps, no buttons to the pockets; blue or white breeches; gold laced cocked hat, shoes with buckles, and a hanger. When in undress uniform he wore a short blue coat without worked button-holes and having a standing collar with a button and a slip of gold lace on each side. Dirks were not to be worn on shore by any officer. This was the uniform prescribed by the Navy Department under Robert Smith, Secretary of the Navy from 1802 to 1809, the description being taken from a memorandum of Midshipman Macdonough. 1800

Three-twentieths of the prize money were shared by the "midshipmen, surgeon's mates, captain's clerk, clergyman or schoolmaster, boatswain's mates, gunner's mates, carpenter's mates, ship's steward, sailmaker, master at arms, armorer and cockswain."* Later, three and a half twentieths were divided between the "midshipmen, surgeon's mates, captain's clerks, schoolmasters, boatswain's mates, gunner's mates, carpenter's mates, ship's stewards, sailmakers, masters at arms, armorers, cockswains and coopers."†

Boys are boys in all ages, and the midshipmen of that day were as fond of fun and as full of life and spirits as are healthy boys of to-day and sometimes, no doubt, were sore trials to their superiors and others. While the *Ganges* was lying at New Castle, a skylarking party of midshipmen on shore leave conceived the idea of waking up the sleepy place. One of their number climbed into the belfry of the venerable Episcopal church, drew the bell rope up through the hole in the

* Act of Congress, March 2, 1799.

† Act of Congress, April 23, 1800.

1800 floor and let it down outside. Then the entire party tailed on to the rope and gave the old bell such a ringing as aroused and startled the whole town. The supports of the bell, unused to such a severe strain, presently broke and the bell crashed to the floor, while the midshipmen took to their heels. Before the *Ganges* left, the worthy dominie received an unsigned letter expressing regret for the damage done and containing a sum of money which, it was hoped by the senders, would cover the cost of the repairs. This letter was in existence until recently, and from the writing it was always supposed to be the work of Midshipman Macdonough.

The title of "midshipman" continued to be used until March 3, 1883, when it disappeared to make room for "ensign, junior grade." Much to the gratification of those who are interested in the history and traditions of the navy and were sorry to see the old name go, the title of "midshipman" was revived on July 1, 1902, and applied to the students at the Naval Academy in lieu of "naval cadet." He bears an honored and historic title, does the midshipman — a title borne by men whose names adorn the bright pages of the annals of the service — a title often linked with deeds of heroism and devotion to duty, and inseparably connected with the glories of the navy.

The 24-gun ship *Ganges*, on which Midshipman Macdonough made his first cruise, was a vessel of 504 tons and carried a crew of 220. She had been an Indiaman and was bought by the government in Philadelphia in 1798 for fifty-eight thousand dollars, which included some guns and military stores. Her armament con-

sisted of long 9 and 6-pounders. She had already 1800
made two cruises, the first under Captain Richard Dale, and the second under Commodore (Captain) Thomas Tingey. The Navy Department has no logs, lists of officers or sailing orders on her third and fourth cruises under Captain John Mullett, and I can find no information concerning her movements under that officer except the brief account in Commodore Macdonough's autobiography. All her cruises, except the first, were made in West Indian waters, the principal field of operations in the war with France.

The ratification of a treaty of peace with France February 3, 1801, was followed by an act of Congress 1801
on March 3 providing for a naval peace establishment and authorizing the incoming President (Thomas Jefferson) to sell all or any of the vessels belonging to the navy except the *United States*, *Constitution*, *President*, *Chesapeake*, *Philadelphia*, *Constellation*, *Congress*, *New York*, *Boston*, *Essex*, *Adams*, *John Adams* and *General Greene*. The *Enterprise* was kept by the Department as a tender, although her retention was unauthorized. Under this act the *Ganges* was sold for twenty-one thousand dollars and the other vessels also disposed of. A large number of men and most of the officers were discharged, the act directing the President to retain but nine captains (out of twenty-eight), thirty-six lieutenants (out of one hundred and ten), and one hundred and fifty midshipmen (out of three hundred and fifty). The disproportionate number of midshipmen retained was probably due to their strong endorsement by the Secretary of the Navy, who, in a communication to the House of Representatives on

1801 January 12, 1801, said: "The midshipmen are among the most promising young men of our country, possess all the materials to make officers equal to any in the world, and well merit the fostering care of their government."

During this war with France our infant navy, born under stress of circumstances, served as a training school for almost all the officers who took part later in the war with Tripoli. The experience in naval warfare, the confidence begotten of the success of the American vessels, and the development of an esprit de corps under conditions which were peculiarly trying, strengthened our hands immeasurably in the conflict with that Power and aided, in a large degree, to crown our efforts with success.

CHAPTER IV

1801-1803

Our relations with the Barbary Powers — A squadron of observation sent to the Mediterranean — A second squadron sent to the same sea — Macdonough's cruise in the *Constellation* — His first encounter with the Tripolitans.

THE ink was hardly dry on John Adams' signature 1801 to the naval peace establishment bill when it became necessary to take action regarding the complications which had arisen with some of the Barbary states.

The treaty of peace concluded with Algiers September 5, 1795, provided, in addition to the ransom of the Dey's American prisoners and various presents, for the annual payment by the United States of "the value of twelve thousand Algerine sequins in maritime stores." * This tribute amounted to \$21,600 a year and was to be paid in certain materials, not in money. The treaty also entailed upon the United States various incidental obligations, for "the custom of Algiers", a Senate committee reported on February 29, 1796, "will render necessary a present, biennially, of nine or ten thousand dollars, and upon the appointment of

* The payment of tribute was in direct contradiction to the policy of the administration as expressed by Thomas Jefferson, Secretary of State, only a few years before. In his instructions of May 13, 1791, to Thomas Barclay, who had been appointed to secure from the Emperor of Morocco the recognition of our treaty with his father in 1786, Mr. Jefferson wrote: "Our distance; our seclusion from the ancient world, its politics and usages; our agricultural occupations and habits; our poverty; and lastly our determination to prefer war, in all cases, to tribute under any form and to any people whatever, will furnish you with topics for opposing and refusing high or dishonoring pretensions." — *American State Papers* (Foreign Relations, I, 288).

1801 a consul a present of twenty thousand dollars.”* In the latter part of 1800 the Dey pressed into his service the United States 24-gun ship *George Washington*, against the strongest protest her commander, Captain William Bainbridge, could make, and sent her to Constantinople with presents and a deputation to the Sultan of Turkey.†

A treaty had been concluded between Tripoli and the United States November 4, 1796, which provided for the usual *douceur* of money and presents but contained the stipulation “And no pretence of any periodical tribute of further payments is ever to be made by either party.” The cupidity of the Bashaw of Tripoli, however, led him to make repeated demands in 1800 for additional presents on the ground that he was not being as well treated in that respect as the Dey of Algiers and the Bey of Tunis. These demands, which were coupled with threats, were not complied with, and on May 14, 1801, war was formally declared against the United States by cutting down the flagstaff of the American consulate.

In August, 1797, a treaty of peace was made between Tunis and the United States which, with some changes, was subsequently ratified. This treaty, which cost the United States money and presents to the amount of \$107,000, contained no provision for future tribute in any shape. The Bey of Tunis was no more back-

* American State Papers (Foreign Relations, I, 549). On April 12, 1808, James Madison, Secretary of State, reported that the payments made necessary by usage were — on presentation of a consul, \$20,000; biennial presents to the officers of the Algerine government, estimated at \$17,000; incidental and contingent presents of which no estimate could be made. — American State Papers (Foreign Relations III, 33).

† American State Papers (Foreign Relations, II, 353).

ward than his fellow pirates of Algiers and Tripoli in making known his wants, however. He complained that a quantity of plank and oars delivered to him in December, 1800, were too short and affected dissatisfaction because some other naval stores had not been received. On April 15, 1801, he requested the President of the United States to send him at once forty 24-pound cannon, and on June 28, 1801, he made a demand on Mr. William Eaton, the American consul at Tunis, for ten thousand stand of arms. "Your peace depends on your compliance with this demand of my master", said the Bey's Minister, who was also frank enough to say to Mr. Eaton that Tunis expected such contributions from the United States would "never have an end." The demands for the cannon and the arms were not complied with.

The treaty made with Morocco in 1786 and ratified July 18, 1787, was still in effect and no open unfriendliness had been manifested by that Power.

Such, then, were our relations with the Barbary states on the signing of the naval peace establishment bill. Algiers was restive on account of our long overdue tribute, and had added insult to injury by compelling the commander of the *George Washington* to hoist the Turkish colors at the main and salute them with seven guns;* Tripoli's threats gave warning of trouble in that quarter; Tunis was dissatisfied with conditions which brought no tribute from the new world power; while Morocco, although apparently peaceably inclined, was distrusted. Of the three restless Powers, Algiers was the strongest. She had advanced the price

* American State Papers (Foreign Relations, II, 353).

1801 of peace with Tripoli and become pledged for that of Tunis. The terms of her treaty with the United States were so advantageous to herself that they excited the envy of Tunis and Tripoli and were largely responsible for the restive condition of those Powers.

In May, 1801, a "squadron of observation", as it was designated, was ordered to the Mediterranean under command of Commodore (Captain) Richard Dale. It consisted of the frigate *President* (flagship), Captain James Barron; the frigate *Philadelphia*, Captain Samuel Barron; the frigate *Essex*, Captain William Bainbridge; and the schooner *Enterprise*, Lieutenant Andrew Sterrett.

Commodore Dale's instructions were to visit the disaffected states and extend the assurance of our friendship to their rulers. If war had been declared by any of them he was to act as he thought best. He was directed to leave the Mediterranean by October 15 if possible — in no case later than December 1, 1801. The squadron arrived at Gibraltar July 1. Within the next five months the *Philadelphia* blockaded, at Gibraltar, a ship and a brig belonging to Tripoli, which were finally dismantled because they could not escape; the *Essex* convoyed numerous American merchantmen and appeared off the Barbary ports; the *Enterprise* engaged, successfully, a Tripolitan vessel of 14 guns and 80 men on August 1; and Commodore Dale, in the *President*, paid a visit to Tunis and Algiers, which had a very quieting effect on their rulers, and also appeared off Tripoli. In December the *President* and *Enterprise* returned to the United States, leaving the *Essex* and *Philadelphia* to protect American interests.

In 1802 another squadron, under Commodore 1802 (Captain) Richard V. Morris, was dispatched to the Mediterranean. This force consisted of the frigate Chesapeake (flagship), Lieutenant Isaac Chauncey; the frigate Constellation, Captain Alexander Murray; the frigate New York, Captain James Barron; the corvette Adams, Captain Hugh George Campbell; the corvette John Adams, Captain John Rodgers; and the schooner Enterprise, Lieutenant Andrew Sterrett. These vessels did not sail together but as each was ready, the first getting away in February and the last in September. Midshipman Macdonough was ordered on October 20, 1801, to join the Constellation, and she sailed from Philadelphia March 14, 1802.

This cruise of the Constellation, which lasted just a year, was not of great importance nor of much general interest. The Navy Department has five reports made by Captain Murray between March and November, but no log. The only complete connected account of the cruise extant appears to be the journal kept by Midshipman Macdonough and now in possession of the Delaware Historical Society at Wilmington. This journal (like those of most midshipmen, who wrote not for posterity but for their captains) does not contain much valuable information. However, considering the lack of variety in daily life on shipboard, it seems to be pretty full in addition to the daily record of knots, courses, winds, distance, departure, latitude, longitude and variation, which appear on page after page with monotonous regularity from Cape Henlopen to Malaga and back to Chesapeake Bay. But, if not valuable, it is at least interesting not only from the personality

1802 of its writer but because it was written while he was acquiring, in a hard but thoroughly practical school, the experience and proficiency necessary to fit him for a commission.

Apropos to midshipmen's journals in general, Mr. Park Benjamin, in his interesting "History of the United States Naval Academy", writes, referring to the duties of a midshipman: "Despite all the fog which enveloped the question of what a midshipman's work really was, one duty never lost its brilliant and unique luminosity, and that was that he should keep a journal. Originally this requirement was a good one, not because it was altogether certain that in after life, say when in responsible command, the experienced officer would recur to this production of his boyhood for professional aid and advice, but simply because it gave him some practice in spelling and writing his own language. It was also supposed to lead him to a knowledge of composition, but that cannot be safely affirmed, because probably nine-tenths of all midshipmen's journals became mere copies of the ship's log."

The Constellation was a fine vessel of 1,265 tons, with a complement of 340 men, and had already done good work in the war with France. Midshipman Macdonough was the second of his family to serve in her, his brother James having been attached to her as a midshipman at the time of her engagement with the *Insurgente* in 1799. Captain Murray was proud of his ship and reported to the Navy Department on his arrival off Malaga: "In the several gales of wind we had I found our ship proved to be perfect in all things, and the alterations we have made in her are vastly to her

advantage in stiffness, sailing and for carrying her 1802 stores." Her greatest speed on the outward voyage was twelve knots an hour, and on the homeward voyage eleven and a half knots an hour, with the wind free.

The Constellation's officers on this cruise were:

Commander	Captain Alexander Murray
Lieutenant	Charles Stewart
Lieutenant	Richard H. L. Lawson *
Lieutenant	James R. Caldwell
Lieutenant	Jacob Jones
Lieutenant	Michael B. Carroll (acting)†
Sailing Master	Richard B. Brandt
Surgeon	Edward Cutbush
Mate	Gershom R. Jacques
Mate	Michael Graham
Purser	Keith Spence
Boatswain	John Hall
Gunner	William Johnson ‡
Carpenter	William Godby
Sailmaker	Thomas Crippen (acting)
Midshipman	Samuel G. Blodget
Midshipman	James Gibbon
Midshipman	D. T. Patterson
Midshipman	Thomas Macdonough
Midshipman	James Biddle
Midshipman	Ephraim R. Blaine
Midshipman	William Miller
Midshipman	William Cutbush
Midshipman	Robert P. Spence

* Sent home under arrest for killing James McKnight, captain of marines, in a duel at Leghorn.

† From the Philadelphia as midshipman, May 9, 1802. Promoted acting lieutenant by Captain Murray.

‡ Resigned to Captain Murray.

1802	Midshipman	Bernard Henry *
	Commanding marines	Captain James McKnight †
	Lieutenant of marines	1st Lieut. Edward Hall

Following is a résumé of the movements of the *Constellation* on this cruise. Sailed from Philadelphia March 14, 1802; arrived at Malaga April 30. Left Malaga May 3; arrived at Gibraltar May 5. Left Gibraltar May 11; touched at Algiers May 17; arrived at Majorca May 19. Left Majorca May 21; arrived at Tunis May 28. Left Tunis June 4; arrived off Tripoli June 8. Sailed for Syracuse June 12, and arrived there June 14. Left Syracuse June 23; arrived off Tripoli June 26. Blockaded the port and engaged the Tripolitan batteries and gunboats July 22. Sailed for Malta August 9, and arrived there August 16. Left Malta August 23; arrived off Tripoli August 25. Sailed for Palermo August 28; touched at Tunis September 5 and 8; arrived at Palermo September 10. Left Palermo September 13; arrived at Naples September 17. Left Naples September 28; arrived at Leghorn October 4. Left Leghorn October 17; arrived at Toulon October 18. Left Toulon October 22; arrived at Malaga November 19. Left Malaga December 16; arrived at Gibraltar December 18. Left Gibraltar December 29; returned to Gibraltar January 2, 1803. Left Gibraltar January 26; arrived at Washington March 15. There she was laid up in ordinary. Midshipman Macdonough was detached from her May 21 and furloughed until called for.

* From the *Essex*, May 10, 1802.

† Killed in a duel at Leghorn by Lieutenant Lawson.

The engagement of July 22, 1802, between the Con- 1802
stellation and the Tripolitan gunboats and batteries
was the first action in the operations immediately
before Tripoli. Captain Murray's report said: "On the
22nd inst. we discovered their whole fleet of gunboats,
about three miles to leeward of the town, consisting
of eight sail, with the admiral's galley, mounting
long 24 and 18-pd brass guns, full of men. We
crowded all sail we could to cut them off from the forts
and had nearly succeeded, but they plyed their oars
and sails with such energy that by the time we got
within gun shot of them we were within reach of the
shot from their batteries, which began to fire upon us.

"However, we resolved to attack them and stood
on till we were within a mile and a half of the beach.
Most of the boats had by this time got nearly on shore.
The admiral then began to fire upon us as did the other
galleys, when we rounded to in 12 fathoms water (our
pilot being very much alarmed in standing in so near
the land) and gave them a very severe fire for about
half an hour which must have done them considerable
damage. At the same time they had an army of at
least 6,000 men drawn up along the beach to protect
them, which our shot put to the rout. As the wind
was in such a direction that we could not lay longer
in our wonted position, we were obliged to haul off, when
they got up under the walls of the town. Whether
this brush will operate for or against a peace I know
not. It will at any rate convince them that we do not
regard their formidable gun-vessels, and it had a pleas-
ing effect upon our young officers, who stood their
fire admirably well. The next day we stood in close

1802 to the town, but they did not honor us with another salute."

Macdonough's journal says: "At 9 discovered several small sail to the westward of the town. Made sail after them. The Thetis* in sight to leeward. At $\frac{1}{2}$ past 10 discovered that the above sails were gunboats, one of which fired several shot at us. At 11 fired at them. At $\frac{1}{2}$ past 11 the town bears S. E. by E., $\frac{1}{2}$ E. Land 2 miles distant. Sounded in 12 fathoms water. Not deeming it prudent to stand nearer the land, as the guns from the fort of Tripoli threw their shot over us, bore down to the westward, keeping up a constant fire at the gunboats, some of which must have been injured. Being but a few yards from the beach † many of our shot went on shore among the troops that were drawn up there (there appeared to be several thousand of them). At $\frac{3}{4}$ past 11 hauled our wind to the N. and E'ward."

With reference to the presence of the Swedish frigate Thetis Captain Murray wrote the Secretary of the Navy from off Tripoli: "I found the Boston here with two Swedish frigates under the command of Count Soderstrom, bearing an admiral's flag, with whom I have had many conferences on board our respective ships, as he had orders from his Swedish Majesty to be governed by the instructions furnished our commanding officer on this station either to make peace or to prosecute the war with vigor (and certainly a high compliment paid to our administration)." The Boston, mentioned by Captain Murray, under command of Captain Daniel

* A Swedish frigate. — AUTHOR.

† Referring, of course, to the position of the gunboats. — AUTHOR.

McNiell, had been ordered to carry Mr. Robert R. Livingston, the American Minister, to France and then join the squadron of Commodore Morris. Instead of reporting to the commodore, however, Captain McNiell cruised independently in the Mediterranean for some time and then returned to the United States. 1802

It was practically impossible for a vessel of the *Constellation's* draught and armament to blockade or bombard a port like Tripoli effectively. Rocks and reefs made a near approach to the shore exceedingly dangerous, while the bays and inlets along the indented coast afforded places of concealment and retreat for the enemy's light vessels and gunboats.

On the recall of the *Chesapeake*, Commodore Morris hoisted his pennant on the *New York*, but he was soon after ordered home and reached the United States in the *Adams* in November, 1803, leaving the *New York*, *John Adams* and *Enterprise* on the station. The government had expected that the appearance of Commodore Morris' squadron in the Mediterranean would soon be followed by peace with Tripoli, but nothing of importance was accomplished beyond impressing the rulers of Morocco, Algiers and Tunis by a show of force. The professional conduct of the commodore was consequently made the subject of a court of inquiry and he was dismissed from the service. 1803

CHAPTER V

1803-1804

Light vessels built for use before Tripoli — Commodore Preble ordered to the Mediterranean — His force — Macdonough ordered to the Philadelphia — Arrival at Gibraltar — Capture of the Moorish vessel Meshboha — Macdonough placed on board the prize — Commodore Preble arrives at Gibraltar — Proceeds to Tangiers — The Meshboha ordered to Tangiers and released — Three of the Philadelphia's men desert from the Moorish prize while lying at Gibraltar — Midshipmen Morris and Macdonough sent on shore to get them — Experience of the two American officers on board the English frigate Medusa — Macdonough joins the Constitution — Learns of the loss of the Philadelphia — Is transferred to the Enterprise — Beginning of friendship with Decatur — Commodore Preble reconnoitres Tripoli — Result of his observations — The Philadelphia — Plans for her destruction — The Intrepid sails from Syracuse and arrives off Tripoli — Attack delayed by gale — Decatur enters the harbor and sets fire to the prize — Destruction of the Philadelphia and escape of the Intrepid.

1803 EARLY in 1803 Congress found it necessary to authorize the construction of two brigs and two schooners for use in the operations against Tripoli. In accordance with an act of February 28 the 16-gun brigs Siren and Argus and the 12-gun schooners Nautilus and Vixen were built and all reached the Mediterranean by November 1. The Siren was commanded by Lieutenant Charles Stewart, the Argus by Lieutenant Stephen Decatur, the Nautilus by Lieutenant Richard Somers, and the Vixen by Lieutenant John Smith. Lieutenant Decatur soon after left the Argus and took command of the schooner Enterprise. The frigates Philadelphia, Captain William Bainbridge, and Constitution (flagship), Captain Edward Preble, were also ordered to the Mediterranean and the Enterprise was retained there, so that the vessels under Commodore Preble's

command consisted of two frigates, two brigs and 1803
three schooners, a force which was much more mobile
and in every way better adapted to the purpose than
any which had preceded it.

The furlough granted Midshipman Macdonough on
May 21 was quickly cut short, for three days later he
was directed to join the *Philadelphia* at Philadelphia.
During the time which intervened between the arrival
of the *Constellation* at Washington March 15 and the
sailing of the *Philadelphia* in July, he no doubt had an
opportunity to visit his home at the Trap, and we can
easily imagine the hearty welcome received by the
young midshipman from his brothers and sisters after a
year's absence in foreign waters. Through all the vi-
cissitudes of a sailor's life the memory of his country
home and the scenes of his boyhood days remained un-
dimmed, and the letters written by him to his sister
Lydia a few years before his death evince the utmost
brotherly affection for all the members of the family and
a tender solicitude for their welfare.

The *Philadelphia* sailed for the Mediterranean July
28. Her officers on this cruise were:

Commander	Captain William Bainbridge
Lieutenant	John S. H. Cox *
Lieutenant	David Porter †
Lieutenant	Jacob Jones
Lieutenant	Theodore Hunt
Lieutenant	Benjamin Smith
Lieutenant of marines	William S. Osborn ‡
Surgeon	John Ridgely

* To the *Meshboha*, August 26, 1803.

† From the *New York*.

‡ Joined the *Philadelphia* in the Mediterranean.

1803	Surgeon's Mate	Jonathan Cowdery
	Surgeon's Mate	Nicholas Harwood
	Purser	Keith Spence
	Midshipman	James Gibbon
	Midshipman	Daniel T. Patterson
	Midshipman	Benjamin F. Reid
	Midshipman	Thomas Macdonough *
	Midshipman	James Biddle
	Midshipman	Bernard Henry
	Midshipman	Wallace Wormley
	Midshipman	William Cutbush
	Midshipman	Simon Smith
	Midshipman	Robert Gamble
	Midshipman	Richard B. Jones
	Midshipman	James Renshaw

Macdonough was number 4 on the list of midshipmen. The Philadelphia arrived at Gibraltar August 24, but sailed immediately for Cape de Gatt on learning that two Tripolitan vessels were cruising off that point. On the night of August 26 Captain Bainbridge overhauled a ship with a brig in company. The former proved to be the Moorish vessel Meshboha, which, under written authority of the Governor of Tangiers, had seized the brig (the Celia, of Boston) a few days before in violation of our treaty. Captain Bainbridge took possession of the Meshboha, placed Lieutenant Cox, Midshipman Macdonough and a prize crew on board and carried both vessels into Gibraltar.

When Commodore Preble arrived at Gibraltar September 12 he found the two prizes there and was informed of the facts concerning them. After making a short visit to Cadiz, Commodore Preble returned to Gibraltar, and, sailing from there with the Constitution

* To the Meshboha, August 26, 1803.

and Nautilus, accompanied by Captain John Rogers 1803 with the New York and John Adams, appeared off Tangiers October 6. The Emperor of Morocco at once disclaimed all responsibility for the acts of his subordinates and followed this up by subscribing to the treaty made with his father in 1786. The Meshboha, which had been ordered to Tangiers, was thereupon released, and also the Meshouda, taken by the John Adams May 5, 1803, other courtesies exchanged, and the incident with Morocco was closed. Congress appropriated \$5,000 to be distributed among the captors of the Meshboha in lieu of prize money.

The American officers and men were glad to leave the Meshboha, which Commodore Preble described as being "such a miserable piece of naval architecture that I do not believe we have a naval officer in our service that would be willing to attempt to cross the Atlantic in her for ten times her value."

While the Meshboha was lying at Gibraltar there took place one of those irritating occurrences which were constantly happening at that time. Three of the Philadelphia's men deserted from the prize and Midshipmen Charles Morris (of the Constitution) and Macdonough were sent on shore to search for them. The three deserters were found together, but as soon as they saw the midshipmen they separated and fled. Two of them were soon secured and it was learned that the third had entered the English dockyard. Handing over the two prisoners temporarily to the sentry at the gate, who probably mistook the midshipmen for English officers, Morris and Macdonough entered the yard and found the man they were looking for in a

1803 ship's boat belonging to the English frigate *Medusa*, Captain Sir John Gore. The lieutenant in charge of the boat declined to give the man up, saying that as he claimed protection as a British subject the matter would have to be referred to Captain Gore, but he offered to take the midshipmen out to the *Medusa* if they wished to present their claim to Captain Gore in person. On reaching the frigate the lieutenant went below to make his report, leaving the two American officers on the quarterdeck. There they remained for half an hour, no one offering to address them or to extend the slightest courtesy. Macdonough, being thirsty, asked for some water and was directed to the scuttle-butt near the mainmast. On his return he found Midshipman Morris and Captain Gore warmly discussing the merits of the case. The latter insisted that the deserter claimed protection as a British subject. The two midshipmen contended that as the United States navy did not knowingly take English subjects into its service, the man must have passed himself off as an American when he enlisted, and that, in the absence of proof, his word ought to be worth as much in one instance as in the other. After some further conversation a formal demand was made for the man, which was as formally refused. The American officers then requested a boat in which to go ashore, which was granted. During their absence on the *Medusa* their nationality had become known and the prisoners left in charge of the sentry had been set free. The commanders of the *Meshboha* and the *Siren* repeated the demand for the deserter to the frigate but without success. Commodore Preble was greatly

incensed when he learned from Morris the details of the discussion with Captain Gore, and in the latter's absence the burden of his displeasure fell upon the young midshipman. Morris, expecting arrest, prepared a written statement of the conversation with the Medusa's captain and Macdonough certified to its correctness, but happily no further notice was taken of the affair. 1803

When the Meshboha was returned to the Emperor of Morocco, Macdonough, not caring "to be in his Majesty's service", joined the Constitution as a passenger, intending to rejoin his own ship, the Philadelphia, as soon as an opportunity offered. This was the first time he had sailed on the Constitution and he little thought that twenty-two years later, in the same waters, she would be his last command. Touching at Gibraltar, Cadiz and Algiers, the Constitution arrived off Malta November 27. On the way up she spoke the British frigate Amazon and heard of the loss of the Philadelphia October 31. At Malta the intelligence was confirmed by letters from Captain Bainbridge. Macdonough thus learned of the misfortune which had overtaken his companions and realized his own providential escape from the same fate by being left on the prize Meshboha. The Constitution sailed at once for Syracuse and arrived there November 28 with the Enterprise, which she met off Cape Passaro.

On December 14 Midshipman Macdonough was transferred from the Constitution to the Enterprise, and he then, for the first time, met Stephen Decatur, her commander. The former was just completing his twentieth, and the latter his twenty-fifth, year. Both were young,

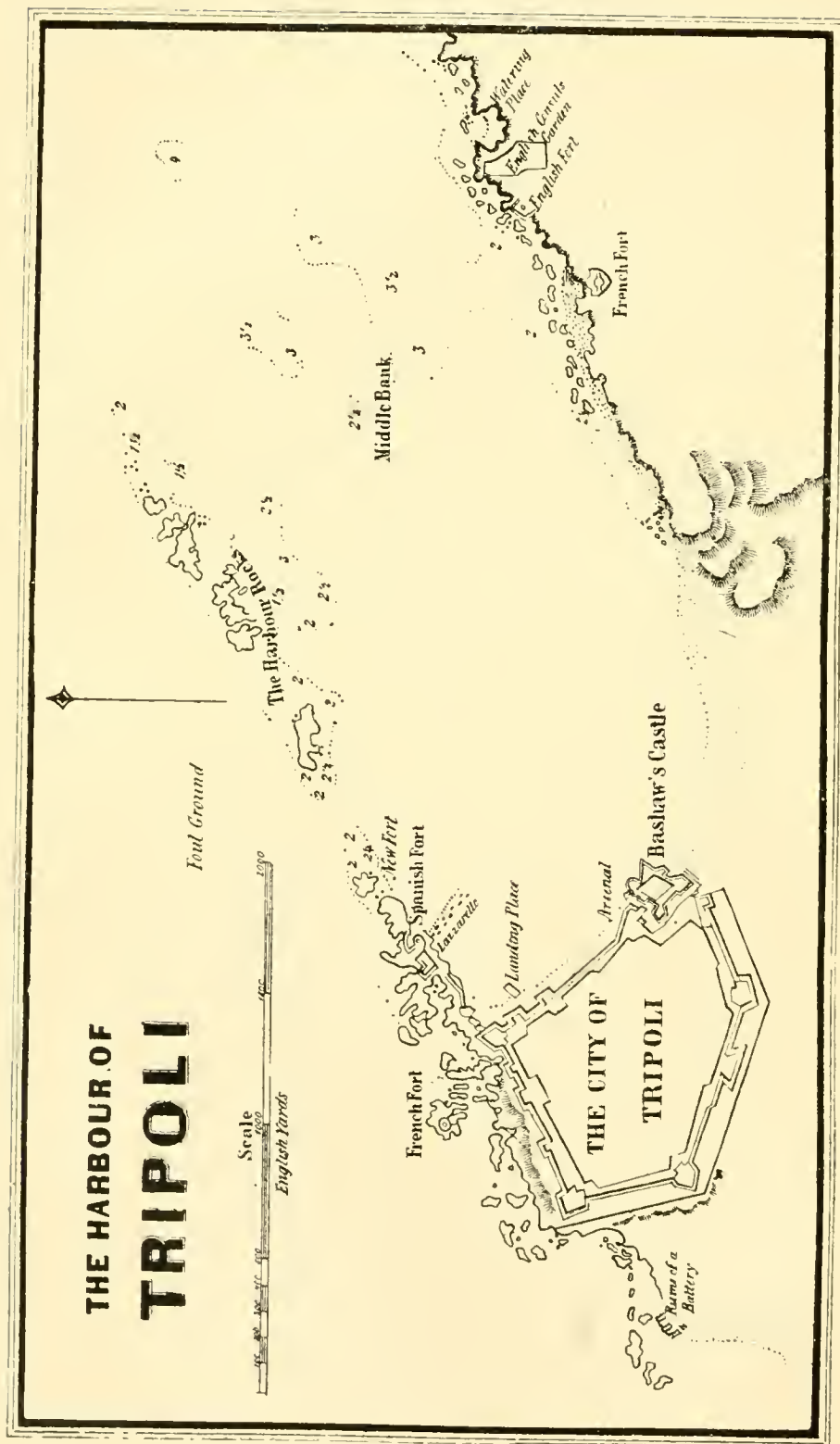
1803 active and daring; both were actuated by the purest principles in private and public life; and both were filled with love for the service to which they had dedicated their lives. Despite the disparity in years and rank there sprang up between them a friendship which, cemented by common dangers in war and by common honors in peace, remained unbroken until Decatur's death.

The officers of the *Enterprise* at this time were:

Commander	Lieutenant Stephen Decatur
Lieutenant	Joseph Bainbridge
Lieutenant	James Lawrence
Midshipman	Thomas Macdonough
Midshipman	George Mitchell
Midshipman	Walter Boyd
Surgeon's Mate	Lewis Heerman

In a vessel the size of the *Enterprise* the crew and officers were naturally brought more immediately under the eye of the commander, and while dereliction of duty was more easily detected and punished, conspicuous bravery was more quickly noted and rewarded. Macdonough's transfer to the *Enterprise* was, therefore, in a way, an advantage to him professionally, and he was quick to grasp his opportunities. We will now follow his fortunes in that lucky little vessel.

The loss of the *Philadelphia* was a fresh incentive to bring the Bashaw of Tripoli to terms. The knowledge that 307 of her officers and men were in the power of a fierce and unscrupulous foe quickened the courage and strengthened the arm of every man in the American squadron. On December 17 Commodore Preble, with the *Constitution* and *Enterprise*, sailed for Tripoli to examine its harbor and defenses. On December 23



PLAN OF THE HARBOR AND DEFENSES OF TRIPOLI
(From Cooper's Naval History of the United States)

the Enterprise chased and captured the Tripolitan ketch Mastico, 60 tons and 4 guns, which was subsequently taken into our service and rechristened the Intrepid. Heavy weather soon after compelled the Constitution and Enterprise to return to Syracuse with the prize. While lying there a plan for the recapture and destruction of the Philadelphia was perfected. 1803

Commodore Preble's reconnaissance of Tripoli showed it to be "well walled, protected by batteries judiciously constructed, mounting one hundred and fifteen pieces of heavy cannon, and defended by twenty-five thousand Arabs and Turks; the harbor protected by 19 gunboats, two galleys, two schooners of eight guns each, and a brig mounting ten guns, ranged in order of battle, forming a strong line of defense at secured moorings inside a long range of rocks and shoals extending more than two miles to the eastward of the town, which, from the harbor, protects them from the northern gales, and renders it impossible for a vessel of the Constitution's draft of water to approach near enough to destroy them, as they are sheltered by the rocks and can retire under that shelter to the shore unless they choose to expose themselves in the different channels and openings of the reefs for the purpose of annoying their enemies. Each of their gunboats mounts a heavy eighteen or twenty-six pounder in the bow, and two brass howitzers on their quarters, and carry from thirty-six to fifty men. The galleys have each one hundred men; schooners and brigs about the same number." *

* Commodore Preble to Secretary of the Navy, September 18, 1804, in American State Papers (Naval Affairs I, 133).

1803 Surrounded by these formidable means of offense and defense lay the Philadelphia. With her guns turned against her own friends she was a valuable addition to the Bashaw's force and her presence in the harbor seriously interfered with Commodore Preble's plans for blockading and bombarding the town. Owing to her condition and position, to attempt to carry her by boarding and then bring her out was too hazardous, if not impossible. It was finally decided to endeavor to carry her by boarding and then destroy her. The performance of this delicate and dangerous duty was entrusted to Lieutenant Decatur.

1804 The ketch Intrepid, which was particularly suited to the purpose, was fitted and provisioned and Decatur was instructed to man her with volunteers from his own vessel, the Enterprise. When he announced to the assembled officers and crew the Intrepid's destination and service and called for volunteers, the entire ship's company, from powder monkey to senior lieutenant, volunteered to accompany him. As Commodore Preble had limited the number to be taken, however, Decatur selected sixty-two of his best men and five of his officers, namely, Lieutenants James Lawrence, Joseph Bainbridge and Jonathan Thorn; Surgeon's Mate Lewis Heerman; and Macdonough, whom Mackenzie, in his "Life" of Decatur, calls Decatur's "favorite midshipman." From the Constitution Commodore Preble sent Midshipmen Ralph Izard, John Rowe, Charles Morris, Alexander Laws and John Davis. Midshipman Thomas O. Anderson and several men were subsequently received from the Siren. Salvatore Catalano acted as pilot. Lieutenant Charles

Stewart was instructed to support Decatur with the 1804
Siren and to cover the retreat with his boats.

On the evening of February 3* the *Intrepid* and *Siren* left Syracuse and arrived off Tripoli the 7th.† The immediate carrying out of the enterprise was delayed by a storm which lasted several days and drove both vessels to the eastward. During the gale the situation of Macdonough and his companions was both precarious and uncomfortable. "The commander, three lieutenants, and the surgeon occupied the very small cabin. Six midshipmen and the pilot had a platform laid on the water casks, whose surface they covered when they lay down for sleep, and at so small a distance below the deck that their heads would reach it when seated on the platform. The marines had corresponding accommodations on the opposite side, and the sailors had only the surface of the casks in the hold. To these inconveniences were added the want of any room on the deck for exercise, and the attacks of innumerable vermin, which our predecessors, the slaves, had left behind them. The provisions proved to be decayed and offensive. Fortunately our confinement did not continue long enough to affect our health or vigor." ‡

Finally, on the 16th, the weather became pleasant and the *Intrepid* stood in for Tripoli. By using drags without shortening sail, in order to allay suspicion,

* Commodore Preble to Secretary of the Navy, February 19, 1804, in *Annals of Congress* (Gales & Seaton), 8th Congress, 2nd Session, page 1635. Navy Department files. Autobiography of Commodore Charles Morris.

† Lieutenant Decatur to Commodore Preble, February 17, 1804, in *Annals of Congress* (Gales & Seaton), 8th Congress, 2nd Session, page 1637. Navy Department files.

‡ Autobiography of Commodore Charles Morris.

1804 Decatur timed his movements so as to enter the harbor at seven o'clock in the evening.* His orders for the attack were simple and concise. The spar and gun decks of the Philadelphia were to be carried first. Then he with Midshipmen Izard and Rowe and fifteen men were to hold the upper deck; Lieutenant Lawrence with Midshipmen Laws and Macdonough and ten men were to fire the berth deck and forward store room; Lieutenant Bainbridge with Midshipman Davis and ten men were to fire the ward-room and steerage; Midshipman Morris and eight men were to fire the cockpit and after store room; Lieutenant Thorn with the gunner, surgeon and thirteen men were to guard the ketch; and Midshipman Anderson, in the cutter, was to secure all boats alongside the frigate and cut off those of her crew who might attempt to swim ashore. Firearms were to be used only as a last resort and the watchword was "Philadelphia."

The all important moment of the desperate undertaking was now at hand. Far up the harbor, indistinct in the gathering darkness and guarded like some precious jewel, lay the Philadelphia. She was moored "in the inner harbor, close to the batteries on the castle, the molehead and the New Fort, and within easy range of all the other batteries of the harbor. She mounted 40 guns, which were kept loaded, and a full complement of men was on board to serve them. Close by, between her and the shore, lay three Tripolitan cruisers and twenty gunboats and galleys, all of

* Lieutenant Decatur to Commodore Preble, February 17, 1804, in *Annals of Congress* (Gales & Seaton), 8th Congress, 2nd Session, page 1637. Navy Department files.

them fully manned and in readiness." * To approach her under these conditions was to enter the very jaws of death, yet there was the Intrepid's goal and thither every eye was turned. 1804

The breeze was light and the progress of the ketch was slow. Stealthily she slunk along in the gloom with all but a few of her crew concealed from curious eyes. Unmolested and unchallenged by guard boat or sentry she crept by the forts and had drawn quite close to the Philadelphia when the frigate hailed her. Prompted by Decatur, Salvatore Catalano, the Intrepid's pilot, replied that the ketch was a trader from Malta, that she had lost her anchors in the recent storm and that they desired permission to make fast to the frigate during the night. It was then about half past nine o'clock.† Meanwhile a boat's crew from the Intrepid attached a line to the Philadelphia's fore-chains and received an after fast from one of the frigate's boats. Hauling on these lines the crew of the ketch, still concealed, had brought their vessels almost alongside when the presence of her anchors was detected, the suspicion of the Turks aroused, and the cry "Americans!" rang through the ship. Hardly had the ketch touched the side of the frigate a moment later than over the bulwarks and through the ports of the Philadelphia poured the Intrepid's crew, grim, silent and determined. The Turks, taken completely by surprise, made but little resistance and the vessel was soon

* Proceedings of the U. S. Naval Institute (Operations of the Mediterranean Squadron under Commodore Edward Preble in 1803-4), 1879.

† Lieutenant Decatur to Commodore Preble, February 17, 1804, in Annals of Congress (Gales & Seaton), 8th Congress, 2nd Session, page 1637. Navy Department files.

1804 in Decatur's possession. The order to set her on fire was then quickly and thoroughly executed. Twenty-five minutes after being boarded the frigate was a mass of flames from stem to stern.

The ketch, with some difficulty, got clear of the burning vessel and, under sweeps and aided by a light breeze, made for the entrance to the harbor. Then, and not till then, the crew of the *Intrepid* broke their silence and gave three ringing cheers — cheers of victory and of exultation. But they were not yet out of danger. The flames from the *Philadelphia* lit up the harbor and made the ketch a fair target for the Turkish guns. All the batteries opened fire upon her, joined by the cruisers and gunboats. Several shot passed over and fell near her but she escaped with a single shot hole through a sail. Decatur at once reported the success of the expedition to Lieutenant Stewart, who was lying off the harbor in the *Siren*, and then both vessels sailed for Syracuse, arriving there the evening of February 18.*

The recapture and destruction of the *Philadelphia* not only redounded greatly to the honor of the navy but had a most beneficial influence on its morale. The boldness of the plan was only equalled by the splendid audacity of its execution. Admiral Nelson, who was then blockading Toulon, is said to have called it the "most bold and daring act of the age." In his official report to Commodore Preble, Lieutenant Decatur spoke generously of the "highly meritorious" conduct of the

* Commodore Preble to Secretary of the Navy, February 19, 1804, in *Annals of Congress* (Gales & Seaton), 8th Congress, 2nd Session, page 1635. Navy Department files.

officers and the "coolness and intrepidity" of the men **1804**
under his command, and in making his report to the
Secretary of the Navy, Commodore Preble wrote of
the *Intrepid's* officers and crew: "Their conduct in the
performance of the dangerous service assigned them
cannot be sufficiently estimated. It is beyond all
praise." In recognition of their services, Congress
voted a sword to Lieutenant Decatur and two months'
pay to each of the officers and crew. For very obvious
reasons the officers declined the money.

CHAPTER VI

1804-1806

Incident at Messina — Operations before Tripoli — Macdonough wins his commission — Sad fate of the *Intrepid* — Commodore Preble superseded by Commodore Barron — Peace with Tripoli — Macdonough joins the *Siren* — Returns to the United States.

1804 DURING the next five months the *Enterprise*, with Macdonough still attached to her, was busy on various duties assigned her by Commodore Preble. The unsettled state of affairs in the Mediterranean gave rise to many disagreeable occurrences, and while at Messina Macdonough met with one of those unpleasant experiences peculiar to the times and place. Being detained on shore one night later than usual, he hired a boat to take him off to the schooner. When he saw the boat was manned by three men instead of two, the usual complement, he became suspicious and refused to get into her. Thereupon the three men attacked him with their daggers. Macdonough defended himself with his sword and succeeded in wounding two of his assailants. The third took to flight pursued by his intended victim. Running into a building he mounted to the roof, and then, finding all other means of escape impossible, took the only chance left and jumped to the ground, but was killed by the fall.*

* This incident is taken from an article on Commodore Macdonough in the March number of the *Analectic Magazine* for 1816. In the article itself it is said that the incident occurred at Syracuse, but in a note the author says "we are told" it happened at Messina and gives some further details. The correction and

In April, while forming part of the force blockading Tripoli, the *Enterprise* assisted in forcing on shore, and destroying, a salt laden vessel which tried to enter the harbor under cover of a fog. On June 14, in company with the *Constitution* and *Argus*, she sailed from Tripoli for Tunis, arriving there the 19th. On July 14, in company with the *Constitution*, *Nautilus*, two bomb vessels* and six gunboats,* she sailed from Syracuse, stopped at Malta from the 16th to the 21st, and arrived in sight of Tripoli the 25th. 1804

Commodore Preble had now completed arrangements for an active attack on the city. The force assembled off Tripoli July 25 consisted of the frigate *Constitution*; brigs *Argus*, *Siren* and *Scourge*; † schooners *Nautilus*, *Vixen* and *Enterprise*; two bomb vessels and six gunboats. These were manned by 1,060 men. "The bomb vessels are about thirty tons, carry a thirteen inch brass sea mortar and forty men — gunboats, twenty-five tons, carry a long iron twenty-four pounder in the bow, with a complement of thirty-five men. They are officered and manned from the squadron, excepting twelve Neapolitan bombardiers, gunner- and sailors attached to each boat, who were shipped by permission of their government. This step I found necessary, as every vessel in the squadron was considerably short of complement. The gunboats are constructed for the defense of the harbors. They are flat bottomed and heavy, and do not sail or row tolerably

additional information no doubt came from some person familiar with the circumstances, possibly from Macdonough himself, who, in 1816, was in command of the navy yard at Portsmouth, N. H.

* Borrowed from the king of Sicily.

† The privateer *Transfer*, captured and taken into our service.

1804 well. They are never intended to go to sea, and I find cannot be navigated with safety unless assisted by tow ropes from larger and better sailing vessels; nor even then in very bad weather. However, as they were the best I could obtain, I have thought it for the good of our service to employ them, particularly as the weather in July and August is generally pleasant, and without them my force was too small to make any impression on Tripoli." *

Stormy weather delayed the contemplated operations until August 3, when everything was favorable for an attack. The gunboats were divided into two divisions. The first division consisted of No. 1, Lieutenant Richard Somers (who also commanded the division); No. 2, Lieutenant James Decatur; No. 3, Lieutenant Joshua Blake. The second division consisted of No. 4, Lieutenant Stephen Decatur (who also commanded the division); No. 5, Lieutenant Joseph Bainbridge; No. 6, Lieutenant John Trippe. Midshipman Macdonough was with Lieutenant Decatur in No. 4, not only on this occasion but also in all the succeeding operations before Tripoli. The enemy's gunboats and galleys were formed in three divisions. The eastern division, consisting of nine of their largest boats, lay outside the rocks and within grape shot of the Bashaw's castle and Fort English; the center division, seven boats, was stationed within the rocks as a reserve; and the western division, five boats, was close under the batteries. At 2 P.M. the flagship signalled to cast off the gunboats and bomb vessels, and fifteen

* Commodore Preble to Secretary of the Navy, September 18, 1804, in *American State Papers (Naval Affairs, I, 133)*.

minutes later gave the order for them to advance and 1804
 attack the enemy. At 2.45 P.M. the mortar boats began a general engagement by shelling the city. The gunboats, under sails and oars and with the first division on the right, or to leeward, made for the eastern division of the enemy's boats. The line of attack was soon broken up, however. No. 1, being unable to get far enough to windward to co-operate with the other boats, bore down alone on the enemy's western division; No. 3 left the line in obedience to a signal of recall shown by mistake from the flagship; and No. 5 was unable to keep up with the other boats owing to the loss of her lateen yard while in tow of the Siren.

Nos. 2, 4 and 6 pressed forward and closed although the odds were greatly against them. Covering his advance by a storm of bullets from his 24-pounder and muskets, Lieutenant Decatur laid No. 4 alongside a Tripolitan gunboat and boarded her. Macdonough leaped on board close behind him accompanied by Lieutenant Thorn and the American crew armed with pistol, pike and cutlass. The deck of the Turkish boat had an open hatchway amidships, and the Americans had to charge around it to get at the enemy.* A desperate hand to hand encounter now took place. The Turks, confident in their numbers and believing themselves invincible in this particular kind of warfare, made a determined resistance but could not withstand the fierce onslaught of their opponents, and after a brief but bloody struggle the Turkish boat was captured. Taking his prize in tow, Decatur made for

* Clark says, in his "History of the United States Navy," that Decatur led the charge around one side of the hatchway and Macdonough around the other.

1804 another of the enemy and laying his boat alongside he boarded and carried her after a fierce conflict.* These two prizes, which were brought out safely, had thirty-three officers and men killed and twenty-seven made prisoners.

Meanwhile Lieutenant Somers, assisted by the guns of the brigs and schooners, engaged the western division of the enemy's boats and forced them to retire inside the rocks; Lieutenants Blake and Bainbridge kept up an effective fire against the enemy's boats and shipping; and Lieutenant Trippe boarded and captured the gunboat opposed to him after a bitter contest in which the odds were all against him. Lieutenant James Decatur was mortally wounded while gallantly boarding his adversary, and his second in command withdrew from action. The mortar boats kept up a steady discharge of shells, while the frigate, brigs and schooners directed their fire against the city and batteries. The reserve division of gunboats and galleys, reinforced by the boats of the eastern and western divisions which had been forced to retire, advanced several times to attack our boats but were as often checked by the guns of the Constitution and light vessels. At 4.30 P.M., the enemy's boats having been driven in and the wind shifting, the flagship signalled the bomb vessels and gunboats to retire from action and the squadron withdrew.

* Mackenzie, in his "Life" of Decatur, says that a portion of the crew of No. 4 was left on the first prize and that only Decatur, the "gallant young Macdonough" and nine American seamen boarded the second Tripolitan gunboat. If it is true that the boarding party consisted of only eleven persons, their daring was as great as their success was surprising, for they were outnumbered more than three to one. The *Analectic Magazine* (1813, Vol. I) says Decatur led eleven men into the second boat.

The American loss in this engagement was one killed 1804 and thirteen wounded. In gunboat No. 4 Lieutenant Decatur, one marine and two seamen were wounded, a remarkable record for a crew which had taken two prizes, made twenty-seven prisoners and killed and disabled thirty-three of the enemy in a hand to hand fight. What damage the Constitution and other vessels received was principally aloft. Three of the enemy's gunboats were captured and three were sunk in the harbor by the guns of the squadron. Each of the captured boats carried two brass howitzers on her quarters, and in the bow a handsome copper gun eleven and a half feet long, firing a 29-pound shot and weighing 6,600 pounds. The city was not much injured by the bombardment, but the batteries were considerably damaged. The Tripolitans must have suffered a severe loss in killed and wounded. The character of the service performed by the gunboats in this engagement gave plenty of opportunity for individual distinction, and there were numerous instances of great personal courage and devotion. In hand to hand fighting the despised Frank taught the Turk a lesson he never forgot. Lieutenant Decatur spoke in the highest terms of Macdonough's conduct during the action and still further showed his friendship and admiration by requesting him to present the flags of the captured boats to Commodore Preble.

There used to be in the possession of one of Commodore Macdonough's family in Delaware, a curious old Turkish gun which Macdonough is said to have wrested from the hands of a Turk during the fight and used to replace his broken cutlass, bringing it home afterwards as a memento of the occasion.

1804 The next few days were spent in repairing damages and refitting the captured gunboats for our own use. They were numbered 7, 8 and 9 and were assigned to Lieutenants William Montgomery Crane, Jonathan Thorn and James R. Caldwell respectively. On August 5 the *Argus* brought to a French privateer of 4 guns and Commodore Preble prevailed on her captain to return to Tripoli with fourteen wounded Turks.

At 9 A.M., August 7, the squadron lying about six miles off Tripoli, the flagship signalled the gunboats, mortar vessels, brigs and schooners to stand in for another attack. The bomb vessels were directed to take their position in a small bay, west of the harbor, from which they could easily shell the city without being much exposed to the enemy's fire. The two divisions of gunboats, under Lieutenants Somers and Decatur, were ordered to silence a battery of seven heavy guns which covered the approach to the position assigned the mortar vessels, and the brigs and schooners were to support the gunboats. At 2.30 P.M. the boats and mortar vessels had gained their positions and the *Constitution* signalled them to begin the attack. In less than two hours the walls of the battery engaged by the gunboats were almost entirely destroyed and six of the seven guns put out of action. The Tripolitan gunboats and galleys, to the number of fifteen, advanced several times toward the openings in the rocks as if to come out, but were driven back by the frigate and light vessels. At 5.30 P.M. the flagship signalled the gunboats and bomb vessels to retire, and the squadron withdrew to its anchorage.

The boats fired about fifty rounds each and suffered

more severely in this engagement than on August 3. 1804 No. 9 blew up, killing Lieutenant Caldwell, Midshipman John S. Dorsey and eight men and wounding six others;* No. 4 had a 24-pound shot through her hull; No. 6 had her lateen yard shot away; and a 24-pound shot hulled No. 8 and killed two men. The rigging and sails of some of the other boats were considerably damaged. "All the officers and men engaged in the action behaved with the utmost intrepidity", reported Commodore Preble to the Secretary of the Navy. On the evening of this day the squadron was joined by the 28-gun frigate John Adams, Master Commandant Isaac Chauncey, from the United States. Captain Chauncey brought the information that four frigates were soon coming out under command of Commodore (Captain) Samuel Barron, who, as the senior in rank, would necessarily supersede Commodore Preble in command of the Mediterranean squadron. He also brought a captain's commission to Lieutenant Decatur, and commissions to Lieutenants Stewart, Hull, Smith and Somers as masters commandant. There being no vessel available for Decatur's command, he remained with the gunboats.

Unfavorable conditions prevented further operations until August 24. At 8 P.M. on that day the squadron anchored about two miles and a half from the batteries and at midnight the gunboats and mortar vessels were sent in to bombard the city. The bombardment began at 2 A.M. the 25th and continued until daylight, when the boats withdrew.

* Commodore Preble to Secretary of the Navy, September 18, 1804, in American State Papers (Naval Affairs, I, 133). Commodore Preble's private journal printed in the Proceedings of the U. S. Naval Institute (Operations of the Mediterranean Squadron under Commodore Edward Preble in 1803-1804), 1879.

1804 The next attack was on August 29. The preceding evening was spent in making preparations and at 1.30 A.M. the 29th the two divisions of gunboats, under Captain Decatur and Master Commandant Somers, were directed to take a position close to the rocks at the entrance to the harbor and within grape shot distance of the Bashaw's castle. All the boats of the squadron were manned and went in with the gunboats to assist in boarding the enemy if necessary, while the Nautilus, Vixen, Enterprise, Argus and Siren kept under way near by to support the attacking force. The bomb vessels were not in a condition to be used. At 3 A.M. the gunboats anchored within pistol shot of the rocks and opened a heavy fire on the shipping, city, batteries and the Bashaw's castle, receiving a warm fire in return. At daylight, supposing that the gunboats had expended most of their ammunition, the Constitution stood into the harbor and at 5.30 A.M. ordered the brigs and schooners to take the gunboats in tow and retire from action. Standing on, the flagship opened a heavy fire on thirteen of the enemy's gunboats and galleys which were in close action with our boats, and by sinking one and disabling two more caused the others to retreat. Running well into the harbor she brought to within musket shot of the crown and mole batteries and poured a stream of round shot, grape and canister into the city, batteries and the Bashaw's castle. At 6.15 A.M. she hauled off. In this engagement the American loss was three killed and one wounded. All the vessels, including the gunboats, had their sails and rigging considerably cut up. The Turks were reported to have suffered severely.

The next few days were occupied in making repairs, 1804 preparing the bomb vessels for service, supplying the gunboats with ammunition, etc. On the afternoon of September 3, everything being in readiness, Commodore Preble ordered another attack. The Tripolitan gunboats and galleys had worked along the eastern side of the harbor, to windward, and were outside the rocks off Fort English. This was a skillful move on their part as it precluded the possibility of the American boats running very far into the harbor without leaving the enemy in the rear and to windward. The mortar vessels were directed to drop down to within the proper distance and bombard the city, and the gunboats were ordered to attack the Tripolitan boats and galleys to windward. At 3.30 P.M. the bomb vessels gained their position and began to shell the town. At the same time our gunboats bore down upon the enemy, delivering a hot fire as they advanced, which was warmly returned not only by the Turkish boats but also by Fort English and a new battery a little to the west. When within musket shot the enemy retreated within the rocks and under cover of the guns of the fort. Our boats, with the *Siren*, *Argus*, *Vixen*, *Nautilus* and *Enterprise*, followed them as far as the rocks permitted them to go with safety. One division of the gunboats, with the brigs and schooners, then attacked Fort English, while the other division engaged the enemy's flotilla. Meanwhile, the bomb vessels being greatly exposed and unsupported, the *Constitution* ran down past them, and, bringing to, fired eleven broadsides into the city, castle and batteries, inflicting considerable damage. At 4.30 P.M. she signalled the boats to retire

1804 in tow of the brigs and schooners and shortly after hauled off herself. The damage sustained by the different vessels in this engagement was almost entirely confined, as usual, to the sails and rigging.

The culminating event of Commodore Preble's operations was the attempt to send the ketch *Intrepid*, prepared as a floating mine, into the harbor of Tripoli on the night of September 4. About one hundred barrels of powder and about one hundred and fifty shells were put into her and the plan was for Master Commandant Somers, Lieutenants Henry Wadsworth and Joseph Israel and ten seamen to carry her well into the harbor, set fire to a quantity of combustible material communicating with the magazine, and then escape in two row boats. It was hoped that the explosion would destroy the enemy's shipping and shatter the Bashaw's castle and the city. Dangerous as the undertaking was, officers and men eagerly volunteered their services, desirous, possibly, of emulating the example of those who had so fearlessly recaptured and destroyed the *Philadelphia*. Shortly after 8 P.M. the *Intrepid* entered the harbor under sail, but before she had reached her intended destination she suddenly blew up, killing every soul on board. The next morning it was seen that one of the enemy's gunboats was missing and that three were badly damaged. From these circumstances Commodore Preble was led to believe that the *Intrepid* was intercepted by these four boats and that the gallant Somers and his brother officers and crew, seeing resistance was useless, deliberately blew the ketch up, preferring death with honor to living slavery.

The stormy season now coming on, the gunboats and

mortar vessels were stripped of their guns, mortars, 1804 shot and shells on September 5, and two days later the John Adams, Siren, Nautilus, Enterprise, and Scourge took them in tow and proceeded to Syracuse, arriving there September 15. The Constitution, Argus and Vixen were left to maintain the blockade. On September 10 Commodore Preble transferred the command of the squadron to Commodore Barron and toward the end of December sailed in the John Adams for the United States.*

Macdonough had fairly won his spurs before Tripoli and on September 6 he was appointed acting lieutenant of the Enterprise. His commission was issued March 15, 1805, and was sent to Commodore Barron to be numbered and delivered. It was dated May 18, 1804. This was what is known in the service as a "gunboat" commission, that is, a commission conferring additional rank without additional pay and issued by the President before the Senate's confirmation of an appointment.

Commodore Barron's force consisted of the frigates President 44 (flagship), Constitution 44, Congress 38, Constellation 38, and Essex 32; the 16-gun brigs Argus and Siren; the 12-gun schooners Nautilus, Vixen and Enterprise; and the 10-gun sloop Hornet (bought at

* Congress recognized Commodore Preble's services by passing a vote of thanks and authorizing the presentation of a gold medal. At the same time the officers, petty officers, seamen and marines under his command were thanked "for their gallantry and good conduct displayed in the several attacks on the town, batteries and naval force of Tripoli", and the President was requested "to cause a sword to be presented to each of the commissioned officers and midshipmen who have distinguished themselves in the several attacks." The request was unfortunately worded, and as President Jefferson declined to decide the delicate question as to what officers had distinguished themselves above their fellows, the swords were never presented.

1804 Malta). During the winter of 1804-5 and the following Spring the blockade of Tripoli was maintained and preparations made for resuming active operations when the season permitted. The *Enterprise*, now commanded by Lieutenant Thomas Robinson and with Macdonough as one of her lieutenants, went to Trieste and then to Venice, where she was hauled out for repairs.

1805 Macdonough spent the first few months of 1805 in Venice. Apropos to his stay there it is said that before leaving Delaware he had become greatly attached to a very charming young lady to whom it was currently reported he was engaged. About this time, however, the rumor reached Delaware that he was about to marry an Italian. Venice, moonlight, a pair of dark eyes, a young lieutenant and a gondolier conveniently deaf, dumb and blind is not an impossible combination nor one forbidden by naval regulations, and perhaps rumor did couple his name with that of some daughter of Italy. However that may be, when he returned to Delaware he found the lady had become engaged to some one else.

Leaving the *Enterprise* at Venice, Lieutenant Macdonough went to Ancona to superintend the fitting out of four vessels to be used as gunboats. When they were ready he sailed with them for Syracuse, and on arriving there found peace had been made with Tripoli June 3. On rejoining the *Enterprise*, which had arrived at Syracuse from Venice, he found Lieutenant David Porter in command. Commodore Barron had been compelled, on account of ill health, to transfer the command of the squadron to Captain John Rodgers. The Bey of Tunis showing a disposition to make trouble,



MACDONOUGH WHEN ABOUT TWENTY-TWO YEARS OF AGE

(From a portrait supposed to have been painted in Italy)

By permission of the Historical Society of Delaware

Commodore Rodgers assembled his vessels off Tunis **1805**
 July 31 and soon brought the refractory prince to terms.
 There was now no necessity for maintaining a large
 force in the Mediterranean and our vessels were gradu-
 ally withdrawn.

On March 28, 1806, Lieutenant Macdonough ex- **1806**
 changed his position as first lieutenant of the Enter-
 prise with Lieutenant Lewis Warrington for the first
 lieutenantcy of the brig Siren, Master Commandant
 John Smith. The Siren's officers at this time were:

Commander	Master Commandant John Smith
1st Lieutenant	Thomas Macdonough
2nd Lieutenant	Octavius A. Page
3rd Lieutenant	Bernard Henry
Midshipman	Jacqueline B. Harvie
Midshipman	Andrew Stewart
Assistant Surgeon	Michael Graham

The incident mentioned by Macdonough concerning
 the attempted impressment of a seaman from an Ameri-
 can merchant vessel while the Siren was lying at Gib-
 raltar has been related by different writers in different
 ways and with sundry embellishments, but the story
 loses nothing of its significance by his unaffected and
 sailor-like way of telling it.

He returned to the United States in the Siren in July,
 1806, after an absence of three years — years which
 contained a great deal of hard work, plenty of danger
 and excitement, some pleasure, and not a little personal
 distinction. His service in the Mediterranean was of
 incalculable benefit to him. It was the best training
 a young officer could have had. It supplemented the
 experience he had gained in the war with France, added

1806 greatly to his professional knowledge, and developed his character. He acquired the habits of self reliance and self restraint. Naturally impetuous, he was taught to temper rashness with discretion. He learned that obedience to his superiors was the best way to compel obedience to himself. All the conditions were favorable to the cultivation of those qualities of mind and body which make not only a good officer but a good citizen.

CHAPTER VII

1806-1812

Condition of the navy following the War with Tripoli — Macdonough visits his home in Delaware — Ordered to Middletown, Ct., under Captain Hull — Ordered to the *Wasp* — Joins the *John Adams* and then the *Essex* — Takes charge of gunboats in Connecticut and Long Island — Furloughed to make voyage in merchant service — Correspondence with Secretary of the Navy regarding another furlough — Confirmed by Bishop Chase — War declared against Great Britain — Applies for service — Ordered to the *Constellation* — Takes command of gunboats at Portland, Me. — Letter from Captain Bainbridge — Ordered to command the naval force on Lake Champlain.

IN order to show the condition of the navy when 1806 Macdonough entered it I have given a fairly full but concise account not only of the reasons for its creation but also of its development under the various acts of Congress to the present time (1806). Hereafter I shall speak of it in general terms and in such a way as to give an idea of its contemporary condition and activities in relation to Macdonough's life, referring the reader for details as to its future growth to such books as Cooper's "History of the Navy of the United States", Emmons' "Statistical History of the Navy of the United States", Maclay's "History of the U. S. Navy", and kindred works dealing with specific periods and subjects.

The navy now entered upon a period of comparative stagnation. As our commerce grew our navy ought to have grown with it, but such was not the case. It is not within the scope of this work to discuss the political questions at issue between France, England and ourselves preceding the War of 1812, nor to dwell upon the

1806 severe restrictions placed by those Powers upon our trade with foreign ports and the annoyances and indignities imposed by their commanders upon American vessels and American seamen not only on the high sea but at our very doors. It is sufficient to say that the government did not think it necessary or advisable at this time to increase its naval strength materially. Two vessels, the *Wasp* 18 and the *Hornet* 18, were added to the navy list, and it was decided to build a large number of gunboats for the protection of vulnerable points along the Atlantic and Gulf coasts.

On July 30, 1806, Lieutenant Macdonough was detached from the *Siren* and placed on waiting orders. He took advantage of his temporary relief from active duty to visit his home in Delaware. He had been away from his family three years, and although his letters from the Mediterranean were no doubt full of the stirring events in that sea and other more peaceful and less exciting incidents of the cruise, he probably had to tell again more than once, in his quiet country home, of the strange sights of foreign lands, about the capture of the *Meshboha*, how they burned the *Philadelphia*, and what it was like to fight hand to hand with a desperate Turk on the slippery deck of a gunboat.

On October 21 he was ordered to Middletown, Ct., under Captain Isaac Hull, who was superintending the construction of some gunboats there. As the Commodore writes, this was his first visit to Middletown and it proved a very happy one, for he met the lady who, a few years later, became his wife. After a stay in Middletown of about three months, which probably seemed all too short to him, he was directed, on Janu-

ary 16, 1807, to proceed to Washington and join the ship *Wasp*, Master Commandant John Smith, as first lieutenant. On January 8 the Senate had confirmed his nomination as lieutenant. His commission was issued April 17, and was dated February 6, 1807, and he was allowed a lieutenant's pay from the time he left the *Siren*. 1807

Lieutenant Macdonough remained in Washington about a week and then went to Baltimore to enlist men for the ship. Being unable to get all the men he needed in Baltimore, he went to New York on March 8 to ship one hundred more, for whom the *Wasp* was waiting to put to sea. On the way from Baltimore to New York the stage upset and he got an ugly fall, but luckily escaped without any broken bones. Writing from New York on March 11 to Mr. William Vandeursen, of Middletown, whom he addresses as "dear Van", he says: "I came on here to ship the remainder of the crew (one hundred men) and expect to be at least a month in shipping them owing to the low wages. In the meantime you must write me often for the ship is ready for sea and will sail immediately the above men are procured." He concludes the letter by saying: "I would make this longer but the sailors are making such a noise together with the drum and fife and fiddle they confuse me or would the devil himself, who has a larger rendezvous open than I have."

The *Wasp* sailed from Washington for England and France with despatches, returning by way of the Mediterranean. After cruising in that sea a few months she was recalled and reached the United States the last of the year. During her absence the unfortunate

1807 encounter between the Chesapeake and the British ship Leopard occurred (June 22). The officers of the Wasp on this cruise were:

Commander	Master Commandant John Smith
1st Lieutenant	Thomas Macdonough
2nd Lieutenant	Octavius A. Page
3rd Lieutenant	Bernard Henry
4th Lieutenant	John Downes
Midshipman	Henry E. Ballard
Midshipman	John Porter
Midshipman	Joseph J. Nicholson
Midshipman	William B. Finch
Midshipman	Jacqueline B. Harvie
Midshipman	John H. Wood
Midshipman	William B. Shubrick
Midshipman	Jesse Wilkinson
Assistant Surgeon	Michael Graham

It is curious that Captain Smith should have had with him on the Wasp the three lieutenants, the surgeon, and one of the two midshipmen who sailed with him on the Siren.

1808 The embargo act was passed December 22, and the next year, 1808, was spent by the Wasp in cruising along the coast between Boston and Charleston enforcing its provisions. The following letter, addressed to Lieutenant Macdonough at Passamaquoddy, brought to mind his old squadron commander in the Mediterranean and the exciting days in those waters.

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY TO MACDONOUGH

NAVY DEPARTMENT, April 30th, 1808.

Sir; I herewith transmit to you an impression of the medal presented to the late Commodore Edward Preble in pursuance of the resolution of Congress of the 3d March, 1805.

This is given to you as one of the officers of the navy who 1808
honorably participated in the gallant achievement the memory
of which it is intended to preserve.

I have the honor to be respectfully, sir, your obt st,
RT. SMITH.

On January 31, 1809, Congress authorized the Presi- 1809
dent to fit out and man the frigates United States,
President and Essex and the ship John Adams in addi-
tion to the vessels already in service. In February or
March Lieutenant Macdonough joined the John Adams
at Washington, being ordered to Washington from the
Wasp by Captain Smith. On March 31 he was directed
to join the Essex, to which Captain Smith had also been
transferred. This was Macdonough's third assignment
to sea duty under that officer — first on the Siren, then
on the Wasp, and now on the Essex. Each had prob-
ably a strong liking for the other, and the young lieu-
tenant was fortunate in serving under one who was no
doubt both an able officer and a congenial friend.

The Essex was at Washington preparing for sea, and
on April 22 Macdonough was ordered to Harper's Ferry
to procure arms from the government arsenal for her
marines. He remained on the Essex until September 2,
when he was directed to take charge of the gunboats in
Connecticut and Long Island. On leaving the Essex at
New York the following letter was addressed to him:

CREW OF THE ESSEX TO MACDONOUGH

SEP. 6th, 1809.

Respected Sir; We, the warrant & Petty officers, Sea-
men, ordinary seamen and Landsmen of the U. S. Frigate
Essex, John Smith Esq. Commander, do learn with heartfelt
sorrow your intention of leaving the Ship. Permit us, Sir,
before your departure to return you our most Sincere thanks

1809 and acknowledgments for your officer-like Conduct and Philanthropy during the time we have had the happiness of being under your Command as Second officer. We don't Wish to trouble you with a great Harangue. We can only assure you, Sir, that we all feel as one in the cause of Regret at your about to leave the Ship.

We do Sincerely Wish and hope your Successor will tread the steps which you have to Render the Crew as Comfortable as possible.

We have only to add, Sir, that we wish you all the happiness that man can enjoy, and may He who holds the Destiny of Mankind guide you Safe through life and Pilot you at last to the harbour of Rest is the Hearty prayer of the Subscribers.

To this letter there are thirty-seven signatures and Jeremiah Johnson signs "for the remaining part of the within mentioned crew." The lieutenant had visited Middletown frequently after being detached from duty there early in 1807. The reason for his visits we may easily surmise, and the wishes for his future happiness contain the intimation that he had prospered in his wooing. This letter brings new qualities into prominence. To the dash and courage he had shown under Preble in the Mediterranean we now find added a thoughtful regard for the comfort and welfare of those under him. This quality was sure to make him popular with his men, for while Jack has, or had in those days, at least, the reputation of being a chronic grumbler, he knew when he was well treated, and the letter shows that the crew of the Essex appreciated the young officer's interest in their condition. A similar letter was received by him a few years later. In 1820 the crew of the *Guerrière* presented him with a handsome sword in appreciation of his efforts to promote the "comfort and

happiness " of his men. While these incidents are 1809
unimportant in themselves, they are valuable as side
lights on his character.

Under the naval policy adopted at the close of the war with Tripoli the government had now a number of gunboats distributed at different points along the coast from Maine to New Orleans. Some of these were in commission and some were laid up in ordinary. Lieutenant Macdonough's assignment of September 2 gave him charge of two gunboats at Middletown, Ct., two at Norwich, Ct., and apparently some on Long Island but I cannot place them. He made his headquarters at Middletown and spent most of his time there, his duties being light and requiring only occasional absences. A gunboat command was not a desirable billet under ordinary circumstances. This fact was recognized both by the officers themselves and by the Navy Department. In writing to the Chairman of the Naval Committee of the Senate in February, 1814, the Secretary of the Navy said: " That service is, at best, unpopular with the regular officers of the navy. * * * Those officers who are deficient in experience are justly averse to the flotilla service because they can acquire but very little useful professional knowledge; and, indeed, it is a service in which those who are to form the officers for the ships of war ought not to be engaged."

As the Commodore writes, the navy at this time was not very popular. There seemed to be but little prospect of advancement in the government service and many officers either resigned or secured furloughs and entered the merchant service temporarily. Stewart and Bainbridge were among those in the latter class.

- 1809** A statement prepared by the Secretary of the Navy a little later (February 3, 1812) shows that out of the ninety-one captains, masters commandant and lieutenants then in the service, one (Captain James Barron) was suspended and nineteen, or twenty-one per cent, were on half pay (furlough).
- 1810** Discouraged by these conditions and tiring of inactivity, Macdonough applied to the Navy Department for a furlough of twelve or fourteen months for the purpose of making a voyage to the East Indies in the merchant service. The Department granted his request April 21, 1810, having previously ordered him to Washington April 2 to settle his accounts in connection with the gunboats which had been under his charge for the past seven months. For some reason his furlough was revoked on May 9 and he was ordered to the Chesapeake, but on May 22 he was again given permission to make the East India voyage. He sailed from New York in June for Liverpool and Calcutta in command of the brig *Gulliver* of Boston. After an uneventful voyage he arrived at Boston August 10, 1811, with a miscellaneous cargo which was sold at auction on India wharf September 12. The rich freights brought home by these India traders formed the foundation of many a solid fortune of to-day. In the *Gulliver's* hold were 990 bales and boxes of cotton and silk goods; 16 bales of senna; 83 bags of gall nuts; 12 boxes of gum copal; 48 boxes of borax; 35 boxes of shellac; 281 bundles of twine; 17 bales of goat skins; 111 coils, 32 bundles and 32 bags of lines, cords, etc.; 95 coils of white rope; 50 coils of cole rope; 154 bolts of cotton canvas; 14,125 gunny bags; 15 bags of sugar; 36 bales of Calcutta

cotton goods; 7 bales of bandanna handkerchiefs; 100 1811
tons of Campeachy logwood; 42 boxes of Brazil sugar;
94 barrels of pot and pearl ashes; 10 casks of manna;
and 50 bolts of India hempen canvas.

There is a tradition in the family that while the Gulliver was lying at Liverpool a press gang seized Macdonough on shore despite his assertion that he was an officer of the American navy and carried him on board an English frigate, from which he escaped the same day. There is no mention in the Commodore's papers of any such occurrence nor have I been able to verify the story from any other source. If such a thing actually happened it would have been Macdonough's duty, as an officer, to report it to Washington, and it is not likely that our government or any government, however supine, would have hesitated to demand an instant and ample apology for the national insult.

As soon as he had concluded the numerous duties incident to relinquishing command of the Gulliver, he hastened to Middletown and reported from there on August 25 his return to the United States. At the same time he expressed a wish to make another East India voyage and some interesting correspondence followed.

MACDONOUGH TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY

MIDDLETOWN, August 25th, 1811.

HONBLE. PAUL HAMILTON,

Sir; I acquaint you with my arrival in this country and that I have performed the India voyage agreeably to the permission you gave me.

A vessel is now preparing in Boston for India. The merchants much wish me to go in her, and I have so far, sir, pre-

1811 resumed on your granting me the permission as to take charge of her. As I am in honor bound to fulfill a domestic engagement, returning to the naval service would prevent it and expose me to censure and reproach. At the same time, sir, I shall hold myself in readiness (after this voyage) to attend to any command you may please to favour me.

I have the honor to be, sir, your obt. sert.

T. MACDONOUGH.

HONBLE. PAUL HAMILTON.

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY TO MACDONOUGH

NAVY DEPARTMENT, 29 Augt., 1811.
LIEUT. T. MACDONOUGH,
Middletown, Connt.

I have received your letter of the 25th instant and am happy to hear of your safe return to the United States.

Under existing circumstances I cannot consistently with my duty to the public grant the furlough you have asked.

PAUL HAMILTON.

MACDONOUGH TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY

MIDDLETOWN, Septr. 26th, 1811.
HONBLE. PAUL HAMILTON,

Sir; I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 29th August.

When I asked my last furlough from you, sir, I was under engagements to some merchants in Boston to sail their vessel as well as some of a domestic nature, both of which I felt myself bound in honor to fulfill, and am now called upon to do so. Could you now consistently place me on furlough with permission to leave the United States I should much prefer it to leaving the navy entirely. Could you not, sir, I assure you I am with much reluctance compelled to beg you to accept of my resignation.

I have the honor to be, sir, your most obt. hul. sert.

T. MACDONOUGH.

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY TO MACDONOUGH 1811

NAVY DEPARTMENT, 15 OCTO., 1811.

LT. T. MACDONOUGH,
Middletown, Conn.

Your letter of the 26th ult. was considered. The high character you have sustained in the service disposes me to grant you every reasonable indulgence. You were certainly wrong in making any private engagements which required your leaving the United States without my previous permission & of this you cannot, from your feelings as an officer, but be sensible on reflection. Your having done so has induced me to hesitate upon the proper answer to be given your proposition to resign if you could not have a furlough. As this, however, is the first instance of your having in any degree acted exceptionally since you have belonged to the navy, I have thought fit to overlook it & to grant you the further indulgence asked by you. You will, therefore, consider yourself on furlough for the purpose of making a voyage in the merchant service & on your return you will report yourself to this Department.

P. HAMILTON.

MACDONOUGH TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY

MIDDLETOWN, Octr. 15th, 1811.

HONBLE PAUL HAMILTON,

Sir; I wish to prepare myself to enter the merchant service but previous to taking any steps to that effect I suppose it necessary to be notified of the acceptance of my resignation or of my being placed on furlough and to have your permission to leave the United States.

The probability of my having lucrative employment out of Boston causes me to solicit in this manner your answer.

I am very respectfully, sir, your most obt. humb. sert.

T. MACDONOUGH.

Resignation to be accepted.*

P. H.

* This endorsement of Paul Hamilton on the original letter is crossed out. —
AUTHOR.

1811 There were two reasons, apparently, why Macdonough asked for a second furlough. He states the first reason very plainly, namely, that he had agreed to take out another vessel to India. The position taken by the Secretary of the Navy as to the propriety of making such an agreement before obtaining the Department's permission to do so was undoubtedly correct. The second reason — a "domestic engagement" — is not plain. He could not, obviously, have referred to his marriage in view of his intended voyage to India, which would mean an absence of twelve or fourteen months, and of the fact that he did not marry until December of the following year. From his manner of writing and particularly his reference to "lucrative employment" I am inclined to think that his obligations of a "domestic nature" were pecuniary in character and that he intended to discharge them out of the profits of a part interest in an India bound vessel of which he was also to be the commander. It is interesting to note that although the Secretary of the Navy granted a furlough on October 15, he endorsed on Macdonough's letter of the same date "Resignation to be accepted." It does not appear why or when the endorsement was crossed out. The young officer stood well with his superiors and it may be that some friend at court induced the Secretary to reconsider his action, and possibly Macdonough never knew how near he came to being dropped from the navy list.

There appear to have been some changes in the plans communicated by Macdonough to the Secretary of the Navy August 25 and September 26, for instead of sailing from Boston for India he left New York

March 14, 1812, for Lisbon as commander of the ship **1812** Jeannette Snow. He probably intended to proceed from Lisbon to Calcutta. The Commodore's private papers show that he had a one-fourth interest in the ship, which tends to prove the correctness of the conjecture respecting his reasons for making another voyage in the merchant service. The non-intercourse law which he says prevented his voyage in the Jeannette Snow was one of a series of retaliatory measures, similar in their general character, adopted by our government between 1809 and 1812. The particular act referred to was passed April 4 of this year and laid an embargo of ninety days on American trade with foreign ports.

After this disastrous venture he returned to Middletown. It was while he was living there quietly and happily in the enjoyment of the daily companionship of those he loved that he became a communicant of the Episcopal Church. His parents were members of the ancient Episcopal parish of St. Ann's, in Delaware, but there had been no opportunity for him to be confirmed before leaving home to enter the navy. Since then he had been almost constantly on active duty, exposed to the usual temptations which beset a young officer and under no moral restraint but that imposed by an instinctive desire to live a cleanly life. But the gentle influences by which he was now surrounded disposed him to take upon himself the vows made for him at his baptism, and that sturdy pillar of the Church, Bishop Philander Chase, writes that he prepared and presented him for confirmation while rector of Christ Church, Hartford.

The United States had long chafed under maritime

1812 conditions which were galling to a young, high spirited and enterprising nation. These conditions had been the cause of endless discussions in Congress and Parliament, but discussion had not prevented our ships from being harried nor our sailors from being impressed. So intolerable had the situation become that we were now compelled to maintain our contention by the sword, and war was formally declared against Great Britain on June 18.

The sea-going naval force of the United States at this time consisted of the President 44, Constitution 44, United States 44, Chesapeake 38, Congress 38, Constellation 38, New York 36, Essex 32, Adams 28, Boston 28, John Adams 28, Wasp 18, Hornet 18, Argus 16, Siren 16, Nautilus 14, Vixen 14, Enterprise 12 and Viper 12. Of these the New York and Boston were so decayed that they were worthless. In addition, the navy also possessed one hundred and seventy gunboats for coast and harbor defense, the brig Oneida 16 on Lake Ontario, and two gunboats on Lake Champlain.

News travelled slowly at that time and several days passed before it was known in Middletown that the United States had declared war against England. When the news reached there Lieutenant Macdonough at once sent the Secretary of the Navy the following letter, written, probably the day the information was received:

MACDONOUGH TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY

MIDDLETOWN, June 26th, 1812.

Sir; The United States now being at war, I solicit your

order for service in the navy and hope you will favor me with such a situation as in your opinion I am suited to hold. 1812

I have the honor to be, sir, your most obt sert

T. MACDONOUGH.

HONBLE PAUL HAMILTON.

Three weeks later he received orders, dated July 17, to join the *Constellation* as first lieutenant. He hastened to Washington and found the *Constellation* being repaired with no probability of being ready for service for five or six months. This condition of affairs was likely to try the patience of her officers, who probably preferred "a wet sheet and a flowing sea", especially in war time with a prospect of prize money and glory, to the unexciting task of preparing the vessel for service. To one of Macdonough's temperament this kind of employment was indeed "irksome", as he said. He wanted to be up and doing, and as all the vessels in active service had their full complement of officers, he asked for and secured (August 14) the command of the division of gunboats at Portland, Me. The next day he informed Captain William Bainbridge, who had been selected to command the *Constellation*, of his new assignment and received the following reply:

CAPTAIN BAINBRIDGE TO MACDONOUGH

NAVY YARD, CHARLESTOWN,

23d August, 1812.

My dear Sir; I this day received your official letter of the 15th inst. advising me that you had obtained the Secretary of the Navy's permission to leave the *Constellation* and was to be stationed at Portland. I regret exceedingly this change for several considerations. First, that the country will lose your valuable services on the main. Secondly, that

1812 you will, I think, lose an opportunity of acquiring fame and making your fortune, for if *I can only run away* from our coast I feel confident the Constellation will do something clever. Thirdly, I shall lose an excellent first lieutenant, one in whom I have the highest confidence. But if *love* and the Gods have decreed it otherwise I must be satisfied, and wherever you go you carry my best wishes for your happiness.

I trust ere this you have received many seamen for the Constellation. In 2 or 3 days I shall send thirty fine fellows from here, with 3 anchors. I regret the mast pieces had not reached Washington when you last wrote. Those c-ssed masts will detain me. Whoever may be the lieutenant that relieves you, impress on his mind my wishes and the necessity of daily exercising the crew at the great guns & small arms and to station them as fast as they are received, which will discover the capability of each for the station assigned him and enable to make the proper change before getting to sea.

I shall expect to see you on your way to Portland to communicate to you my disposition of the boats there.

Tell Lt. Brooks I received his message in your letter. I expect Capn Smith will be the commanding officer of the marines. If he wishes a second place I should be glad to have him, but I am in hopes he will get a first situation, which certainly is more desirable. Make my respects to him and inform him his father is well and his brother was quite well 3 days since when he marched from here for Albany.

The good people here expect a speedy peace. What is the talk in the metropolis of our country?

Believe me with real friendship,

Yours sincerely,

WM. BAINBRIDGE.

LT. THOMAS MACDONOUGH,
U. S. Frigate Constellation,
City Washington.

Captain Bainbridge not only pays a high compliment to Macdonough's ability as an officer but indicates the esteem in which he held him as a friend, and the friend-

ship of a man like Bainbridge was well worth having. 1812
 The letter also affords an excellent illustration of the feeling which prevailed in the navy generally that the American vessels would give a good account of themselves if opposed to an equal force in a dual engagement. "The officers of the navy had, before the war commenced, a proper confidence in themselves professionally, and were animated by a desire to wipe out the insult the service had sustained in the attack of the English frigate *Leopard* on the unresisting frigate *Chesapeake*." * This feeling of confidence was not shared in, however, by the country at large nor by the government.

Macdonough was fortunate in being detached from the *Constellation* for by the time she was ready to sail, which was in January of the next year, a strong British force was blockading Chesapeake Bay and she never got to sea until after the war. The division of gunboats of which he had been appointed the immediate commander, succeeding Lieutenant Joseph J. Nicholson, was under the general supervision, at this time, of Captain Bainbridge. By an order of the latter dated August 22 the boats were stationed as follows, viz.: Boston, 2; Cape Ann, 1; Portsmouth, 1; Kennebunk, 1; Saco, 1; Portland, 4. On the above date Captain Bainbridge wrote to Lieutenant Nicholson: "The commanders of the boats below Portsmouth must regularly report to you. The others must report direct to me. The boats stationed at the different places must in the

* "The Life and Services of Commodore Josiah Tattnall." Tattnall and Macdonough were together on the *Constellation* in 1812, the former as midshipman and the latter as lieutenant, and again on the *Constitution* in 1824-5, one as lieutenant and the other as captain.

1812 day time, when the weather permits, proceed to sea and look along the coast, returning every evening into the harbour where they are stationed."

The Commodore writes that he remained at Portland some months, but in this he is mistaken. He did not reach there until September 7, and he left October 5, having been ordered on September 28 to take immediate command of the naval force on Lake Champlain. He was at Portland, therefore, only about a month. It was pretty well known now among his friends that he was soon to marry and some of them bantered him on the subject not a little both personally and by letter, but he took it all good naturedly, as a prospective Benedick should.

Among his papers is a bill for \$75 for the use of "a horse and chaise" from Portland to Burlington, Vt. He writes that the journey was fatiguing. If he had gone more into details I suspect we would find that the most uncomfortable part of the trip was that made on horseback, for sailors, as a rule, are not partial to that means of locomotion. But if the journey was tiresome and the discomforts not a few, as an offset it was made at a most favorable time. No one who has traversed this region in the Fall of the year can remain insensible to the beauties of nature and her inimitable handiwork when, with the crisp coolness of the October breeze upon his cheek, his eye takes in the hills and mountains clothed in the glory of autumnal dyes. The vast spaces of the giant canvas filled with a riot of color from fiery red to sombre brown is a sight never to be forgotten.

Before Macdonough left the seaboard for the lake

several important events occurred. On July 17 the 1812 frigate Constitution, Captain Isaac Hull, fell in with a British squadron but escaped through the masterly seamanship of her commander; on August 13 the frigate Essex, Captain David Porter, captured the British ship Alert, Captain Laugharne; and on August 19 the Constitution, Captain Hull, captured the English frigate Guerrière, Captain Dacres. These successes, particularly the last, restored a certain amount of public confidence in the little navy which was coping with such a giant antagonist. The only loss so far sustained was the capture of the brig Nautilus, Lieutenant William M. Crane, on July 16, by the British squadron which the Constitution fell in with the next day and led such a long stern chase.

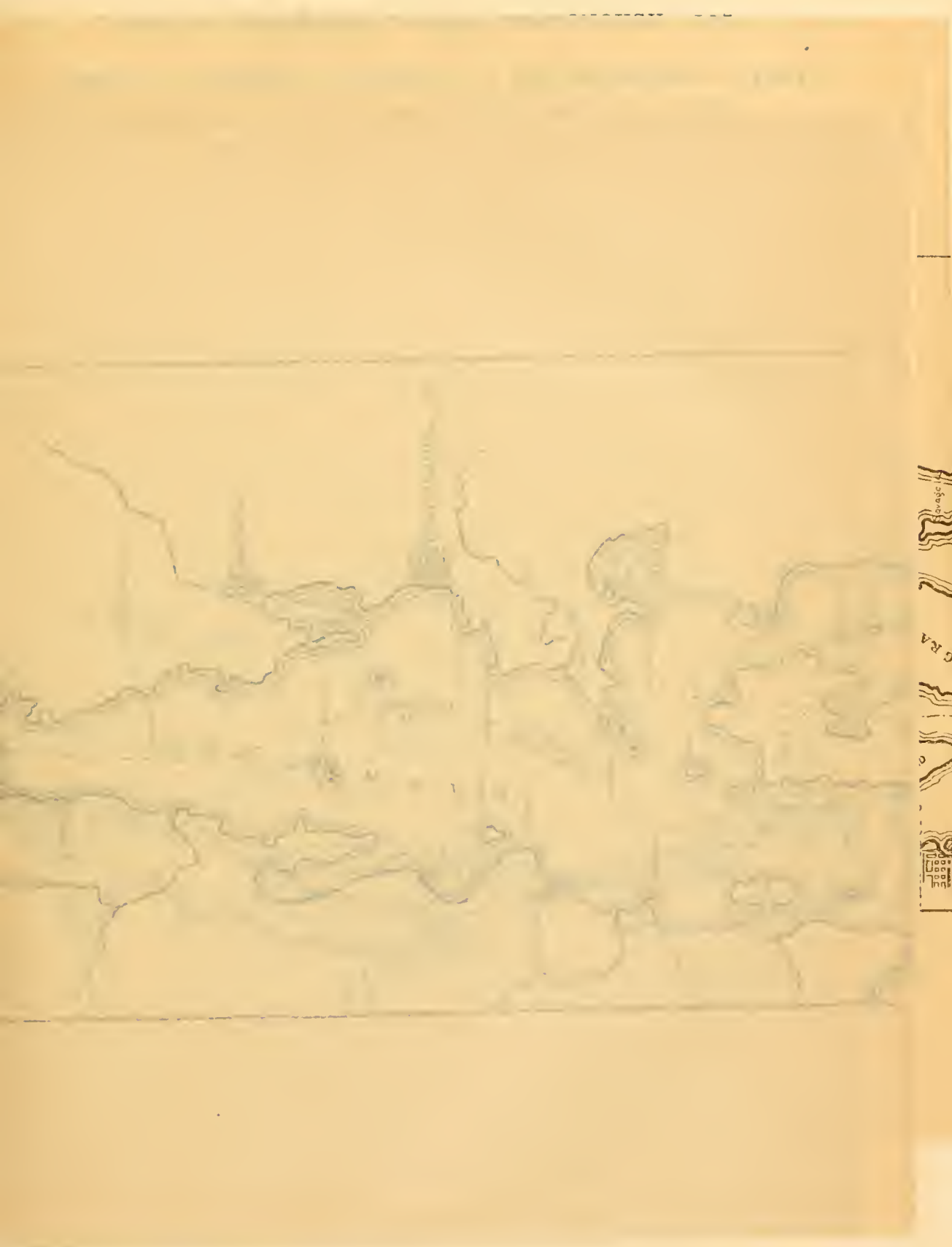
CHAPTER VIII

1812-1813

Lake Champlain — Its early wars — Difficulties encountered by our lake commanders — American naval force on Lake Champlain at beginning of the war — Macdonough prepares it for service — Supports General Dearborn in movement to the north — Goes into winter quarters at Shelburne, Vt. — His marriage — Enters the lake in Spring of 1813 — Loss of the Growler and Eagle — Report of Sailing Master Loomis, commanding the Eagle — Macdonough directed to regain ascendancy on the lake — Prepares another force at Burlington — The British land at Plattsburg and threaten Burlington — American force re-enters the lake — Macdonough declines to co-operate in a joint attack on Isle aux Noix — Supports General Hampton in his attempted invasion of Canada — Goes into winter quarters at Vergennes, Vt.

1812 LAKE CHAMPLAIN extends in a nearly north and south direction. South of Burlington it gradually narrows, and from Fort Ticonderoga to Whitehall it is hardly more than a river. Its average width north of Burlington is about ten miles from shore to shore and the distance from Whitehall, at its southern extremity, to the Canada line is one hundred and eight miles.

No body of water in the United States is richer in historical associations. Long before the French tongue was heard on the lake the Five Nations claimed it as their own. They fished in its depths and hunted within sound of its waters. Their camp-fires glowed red along its dusky shores and many a Mohawk paddle was thrust deep into its silver bosom in search of the fierce Algonquins of the north. Since the coming of Champlain its waters have reflected alternately the cloud of the white man's warring and the sun of the white man's peace. During the French and Indian war the lake



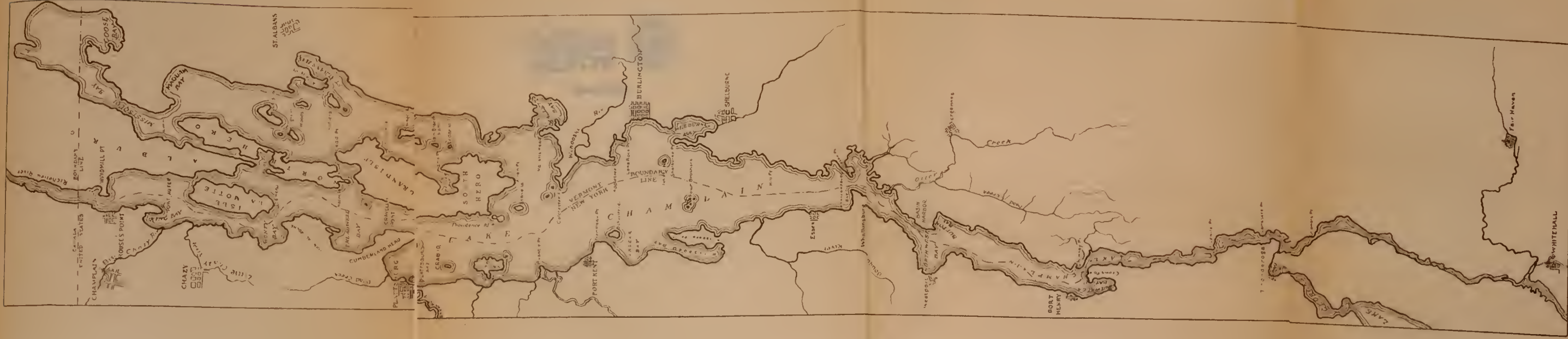
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MAP OF LAKE CHAMPLAIN

(Outlined from map issued by the United States Geological Survey)

Up the lake = towards its source, or south

Down the lake = towards its outlet, or north

formed a convenient highway for the incursions of **1812** both parties. In the war which followed between the English and the French the upper end of the lake was the scene of important operations directed against Crown Point and Ticonderoga, over which floated France's fleur de lis. Their capture was followed by the reduction of the French forts on the Richelieu River and the surrender of Montreal. These were the days of "La Longue Carabine", "Le Renard Subtil", and Uncas. Later, when England and the American colonies came to the parting of the ways, there was hardly a foot of the lake and its borders unfamiliar with warlike scenes. Again the tide of battle ebbed and flowed about Crown Point and Ticonderoga; over the forts on the Richelieu waved alternately the American and the Royal standard; and from off Valcour Island Arnold's beaten and crippled fleet stole southward in the darkness of the night. Now, after a few years of peace, England and the United States were to contend again for the mastery of its waters. The lake lies almost entirely within the United States, and although our command of it was deemed essential from the beginning of the war, the full importance of its control did not develop until toward the close of hostilities.

A distinct and serious handicap was imposed upon our lake commanders in the War of 1812 by the necessity of practically creating their inland navies. On Lake Champlain the British were at the same disadvantage, but while they had, at the beginning of the war, very respectable forces on Lake Erie and Lake Ontario, we had no vessel on the former lake and only one on the latter. The 16-gun brig Oneida on Lake

1812 Ontario was the nucleus of Chauncey's squadron of 8 vessels and 228 guns which engaged the attention of Captain Sir James Lucas Yeo toward the end of the war; from the captured 2-gun brig *Caledonia* grew Perry's Lake Erie squadron of 9 vessels and 54 guns to which Captain Robert Heriot Barclay struck in 1813; and from the diminutive force of 2 gunboats, with one 12-pounder each, on Lake Champlain, there was developed the squadron of 14 vessels and 86 guns which humbled the pride of England's Royal Navy in 1814.

At this time there was a very respectable fleet on the lake engaged in trade, principally with Canada. In 1811 the records of the customs district of Champlain, which included the western side of the lake only, showed 190 clearances between April 10 and December 10 and over half a million dollars in exports for the year. At the outbreak of the war the United States naval force on the lake consisted of two gunboats built in 1808, and the English had two or three of the same kind of craft in the Richelieu River. The American boats were lying in Basin Harbor, on the Vermont side. One of them was partly sunk and the seams of both were so open as almost to admit the hand. Lieutenant Sidney Smith was the commanding naval officer until superseded by Macdonough. When the troops began to assemble on the Champlain frontier, the War Department bought six sloops to be used as army transports. "Six vessels have been purchased by the War Department", read the Secretary of the Navy's order of September 28, "and there are two gunboats built by the Navy Department on the lake, the whole of which is to be under your direction and command."

Macdonough arrived at Burlington on or about October 8, and from there he crossed to Plattsburg to see General Dearborn. The latter, who was directed by the Secretary of War to turn over the six transports to the navy, objected very strongly to the appointment of an independent naval commander and declined to give up the President, the largest and best of the six sloops, without explicit instructions from Mr. Madison. From Plattsburg Macdonough went to Whitehall, where he arrived October 13, and began fitting the two gunboats and the sloops Hunter and Bull Dog for service. The other three vessels he reported as too old to carry guns, and they were retained by the War Department as transports.

It was necessary to impart some degree of efficiency to his force as soon as possible as it was needed to co-operate with the army in a contemplated move against the enemy. Without wasting any time in wondering what could be done and how to do it, Macdonough took off his coat (literally, no doubt) and set to work to get the flotilla into the best condition he could with the means at his command. One of the first things he did was to write to Captain Hull at New York for men and stores. Captain Hull replied November 3 that the stores would be sent but that it would be impossible for him to furnish the men as he could not get half enough for the vessels fitting out at New York, "and men are not to be got. * * * What you will do for men I cannot tell." The severity of the climate, the remoteness from the centres of population and the character of the service made it very hard to secure crews from the seaboard for the lake vessels. The condition was met, as

1812 will be seen later, by employing soldiers to fill out the ships' companies, which was a very unsatisfactory plan but the only thing to be done. Another disadvantage Macdonough labored under was the necessity of procuring all his naval stores at New York. It was easy enough to load them on a sailing vessel and carry them up the Hudson River to Albany, but from there they had to be transported in wagons over roads which were poor at the best and impassable in bad weather. The difficulty in securing men and the delay in transporting munitions of war and other necessary articles were applicable, of course, to all the lake stations, but the latter disadvantage applied to the Lake Champlain station in a less degree, perhaps, than to the others owing to its relative nearness to Albany, the distributing point, which was 78 miles from Whitehall.

It should be understood that, in speaking of the difficulties he encountered in "a part of the country where nobody knew anything that was necessary to be done", Macdonough did not mean to disparage the ability of the lake builders and ship carpenters to fit out vessels for ordinary commercial use. What he meant was that the lake men were ignorant of everything pertaining to a vessel of war — so ignorant that "mechanical assistance and naval supplies offered in their application a phenomenon to the surrounding citizens of Champlain." *

As soon as each vessel was in as serviceable a condition as possible it was sent to Plattsburg. The Hunter, Lieutenant Sidney Smith, arrived there October 31, and the Bull Dog, Lieutenant Macdonough, with the

* Officers of the Lake Champlain squadron to Macdonough, November 11, 1814.

two gunboats, reached there a few days later. The Hunter carried two 12's, four 6's, and one long 18 on a pivot. The Bull Dog was armed with six 6's, and one 18 on a pivot. The gunboats had one long 12 each. These figures are from official sources. It may be well to call attention here to the fact that the armaments of some of the vessels in the Lake Champlain squadron varied from time to time as prudence or necessity required.

On November 16 General Dearborn left Plattsburg at the head of 5,000 regulars and militia and advanced toward Canada, with his right supported by Macdonough. On the morning of the 20th a British force was encountered at the Lacolle River, about four miles across the line. After a smart skirmish General Dearborn fell back and the combined land and naval forces returned to Plattsburg November 23 after a fruitless expedition. It was now too late in the season to carry on any extended operations, and early in December his "poor forlorn looking squadron", as its commander pathetically called it, went into winter quarters at Shelburne, six miles and a half south of Burlington. Some time during the Fall the President (six 18's and two long 12's) was given up by General Dearborn and was included by Macdonough in a report to the Secretary of the Navy December 20.

Macdonough now set about bringing another campaign to a close. Obtaining leave of absence from the Navy Department he went to Middletown where, on December 12, he married Lucy Ann Shaler, daughter of Nathaniel and Lucretia Ann (Denning) Shaler, and took her back with him to spend the winter at Bur-

1812 lington. The bride's father was of English stock, born and brought up in Middletown, and in his younger days had been a staunch Tory. Her mother was the daughter of William Denning of New York, prominent in his state during and after the Revolution and a friend of Washington. Mrs. Macdonough was a charming and accomplished woman and a happier marriage would be hard to find. Among those who sent their congratulations was Ludlow Dashwood, purser at the Portland station. "Permit me to congratulate you", he wrote, "on your having accomplished your wish in changing the name of your *Mam* to one much more dear, especially as it was with the *advice* and *consent* of the *Senate*. Should you again arrive amongst us as our commander you little think with what pleasure you would be greeted." He added: "Your force is respectable and should the war continue, your friends anticipate a great deal from your next Spring's movements."

While Macdonough was busy on Lake Champlain our little navy had gathered fresh laurels on the sea. On October 25 the frigate *United States*, Captain Stephen Decatur, captured the British frigate *Macedonian*, Captain Carden, and on December 29 the frigate *Constitution*, Captain William Bainbridge, took the British frigate *Java*, Captain Lambert. Our losses were unimportant compared with our victories. On October 18 the sloop of war *Wasp*, Master Commandant Jacob Jones, having previously captured the British sloop of war *Frolic*, Captain Whinyates, was herself taken by the British frigate *Poictiers*, Captain Beresford, and on November 22 the brig *Vixen*, Lieutenant G. W. Read, struck to the British frigate *Southampton*, Captain Yeo.

During the winter of 1812-13 Macdonough made his headquarters at Burlington and busied himself in putting his force in a more efficient condition. At his request he was furnished with fifteen ship carpenters from New York the middle of February, and in March a supply of carronades, gun carriages, ammunition etc. was sent to Whitehall to be forwarded to Shelburne by water as soon as the season permitted. The Hunter and Bull Dog had quarterdecks extending one-third forward, on which no guns could be mounted with safety. These decks were removed and five guns placed on each side instead of three as before, making eleven guns on each vessel instead of seven.

In April he entered the lake with the following force:

Sloop President	12 guns	{ 8 18's 4 long 12's
Sloop Growler	11 guns	{ 2 short 18's 10 6's
Sloop Eagle	11 guns	{ 10 18's (carronades)
2 gunboats	2 guns	1 12 each
36		

The President was commanded by Lieutenant Macdonough, the Growler by Lieutenant Sidney Smith, and the Eagle by Sailing Master Jairus Loomis. The Growler and Eagle were formerly the Hunter and Bull Dog respectively. The armament of the President is given by Joseph Barron, Jr., her pilot and sailing master; that of the other two sloops is known from the British return of ordnance etc. found on them when captured a few weeks later; and the gunboats were

1813 armed as in the previous Fall. The President was the flagship of the squadron during the whole of this year. The two gunboats were not placed in service as soon as the other vessels owing to lack of men to man them.

The actual efficiency of this force was by no means in proportion to its indicated strength in vessels and guns. Partly on account of natural difficulties and partly from the necessity of getting on the lake as early as possible, the squadron was not only deficient in various kinds of equipment but was poorly manned as well as under manned. The sloops "had neither good officers or men, as there were none on the station."* But such as it was, the force was quite strong enough to hold the control of the lake. About April 25, which was probably just after leaving winter quarters, the President, Growler and Eagle were at Plattsburg. For the next four or five weeks the little squadron was kept busily employed in various ways until it was crippled by an accident to the President the last of May and the capture of the Growler and Eagle on June 3. "The sloop President, which was the flag, or my vessel", the Commodore wrote, "having been run on shore and injured in her bottom, it became necessary that she should be hove out and repaired before she could go on service as she leaked very badly, and the two gunboats of ours being not yet prepared for service, it was my intention to continue in port until they should be, and also to put the President in order, the means of doing all which were very bad, together with our being without even tolerably good men. At this time the gunboats of the enemy were in the practice of com-

* Macdonough to Captain Isaac Chauncey, March 10, 1815.

ing up to, and, I believe, over the line and annoying whatever craft of ours might be in the vicinity of the line, to prevent which Lt. Smith was directed to proceed to the lines." *

The Navy Department has no report of the loss of the Growler and Eagle. The report which Sailing Master Loomis, commanding the Eagle, made to Macdonough is in the shape of a sea log, or journal, and covers the movements of the Eagle (and incidentally of the Growler) from 10 A.M. July 2 to 11 A.M. July 3, when she was captured. A nautical day, so to speak, is from meridian, or noon, of one day to meridian the next day, the time from meridian to midnight being designated in the usual way as P.M., and from midnight to meridian as A.M. Sailing Master Loomis, however, for some reason I do not understand, designates the time from meridian to midnight as A.M., and from midnight to meridian as P.M. I have adhered strictly to the original in the following copy of Loomis' report but have indicated within brackets the time which we are accustomed to designate as A.M. and P.M.

A report having been received that the enemy's gunboats had come out of the Richelieu River, Lieutenant Macdonough, on the morning of July 2, ordered the Growler and Eagle, which were lying in Plattsburg Bay, to proceed to the line and confine the British to their own waters. Accordingly the sloops got under way at 11 A.M. and stood down the lake with a light breeze from the south. Loomis' report tells the rest of the story. Under date of July 3 he writes:

* Macdonough to Captain Isaac Chauncey, March 10, 1815.

1813 SAILING MASTER LOOMIS TO MACDONOUGH

At 1 A.M. [1 P.M. July 2] Lieut. Smith made a signal to beat to quarters and clear away for action and load the guns with one round shot and a stand of grape. At 5 came to anchor at Champlain, one mile from the lines. At 6 received orders from Lieut. Smith to get under way and proceed up the lake to Point au Fer, four miles distance, and return in the evening. At 7 hove to with the jib sheet to windward off Point au Fer. At 8 filled away and ran down the lake for the Growler. At half past we came up with the Growler at anchor and received orders from Lieut. Smith to come to anchor in a line astern of the Growler with springs on my cables. At this time it being very calm, it was with great difficulty that I was able to spring the vessel around so as to bring her broadside on the direction that we thought the enemy most likely to attack us.

Lieut. Smith, on receiving information from his guard boat that the enemy was a bearing up the lake to attack us, gave orders for me to beat to quarters and clear ship for action. Sent out my guard boat to learn the movements of the enemy. At 1 P.M. [1 A.M. July 3] came on board twenty men accompanied by Ensign Dennison. At 2 Lieut. Smith came on board and gave orders for the Eagle to get under way and stand on and off as soon as there was a breeze, deeming it unsafe lying at anchor, for the land shades the water within 50 yards of the vessels so that the enemy could come in that distance of the vessels before discovered. At 3 light breezes from the south. The guard boat returned bringing information that the enemy had gone down the lake.

At 5 Lieut. Smith gave orders for the Eagle to get under way and follow the Growler. At 6 P.M. [6 A.M.] hauled our wind one mile below Hospital Island.* The wind being light and finding a strong current setting to the north, Lt. Smith gave orders to work the vessel up to Champlain as fast as possible. At 15 minutes past six discovered four of the enemy's gunboats in chase of us. All hands lying on their

* This would be six miles over the line and two and three-quarter miles from Isle aux Noix. — AUTHOR.

arms during the night and the ship cleared for action. At 1813 half past six the enemy came within shot and gave us a gun which I returned and tacked ship and gave them a broadside, the ship channel being very narrow (about sixty rods wide) which obliged me to tack often, and continued giving them a broadside on wing tacks.

At 7 P.M. [7 A.M.] received a shot from one of the enemy's gunboats which came through the larboard quarter and wounded the pilot severely, so that he was obliged to be carried below. The loss of the pilot placed me in a critical situation. Not a person on board that ever was in this part of the lake before. I was obliged to follow the motions of the Growler as much as possible. At half past seven discovered a detachment of regulars and militia coming down on each side of the shore. To speak within bounds, there could not be less than 250 on each shore, which began a very heavy fire which annoyed us very much. I then gave them a broadside on the shore which silenced the fire very much. I then tacked the gunboats.* At nine, finding my guns all disenabled but one owing to the britching parting and the ring bolts breaking [*illegible*] bulwarks, I hauled to the windward for the purpose of repairing. At half past nine bore down and commenced the action again with a very hot fire upon the gunboats and shore.

At 11 P.M. [11 A.M.] got everything ready for boarding the enemy. I received a twenty-four pound shot in my larboard quarter between wind and water and went thro' and knocked three planks off from the starboard side under water and she sunk to the bottom and the enemy took possession of her. The Growler keeping up a hot fire till fifteen minutes past eleven and her gaff being shot away she became unmanageable and her ammunition expended she was obliged to surrender to the enemy.

The report made by Samuel Graves, the Eagle's pilot, states that three gunboats opened fire when

*I do not know what this sentence means. Perhaps Loomis intended to write "attacked" instead of "tacked." — AUTHOR.

1813 within about half a mile of the Eagle, which was north of the Growler during the entire action; that the enemy's land force consisted of at least three hundred; that during the action the Eagle's peak halyards were shot away and her mast severely wounded about eighteen feet from the deck; that the shot which sunk the vessel entered the port side about four feet aft of the channels and passed out the starboard side about four inches above water while the Eagle was on the starboard tack, and as soon as she went about on the port tack she filled and went down in shallow water. Graves also says the American loss was one killed and seven wounded, which are practically the British figures (one killed and eight wounded). The enemy reported three wounded on their side, but there certainly must have been a number killed considering the severity of the fire from the sloops.

American accounts give the Growler and Eagle a total of 112 men, but the British official report of their capture gives them 50 men each. Among the prisoners were Lieutenant Sidney Smith*, Midshipmen Walter N. Monteath and Horace B. Sawyer, Sailing Master Jairus Loomis, Master's Mates John Trumbull and John Freeborn, Samuel Graves, pilot of the Eagle, and Abraham Walter, pilot of the Growler; also Captain Oliver Herrick and Ensign Washington Dennison, both of the militia regiment stationed at Champlain

* Lieutenant Smith and two fellow prisoners (Major Christopher Van De Venter, Deputy Quartermaster General, U. S. Army, and Captain Isaac Roach Jr., 23d U. S. Infantry) escaped from the improvised jail at Quebec the night of November 27, 1813, by cutting a carpet into strips which were knotted together into a rope by which they let themselves down from a garret window. Unfortunately they were recaptured not far from Quebec and taken back to their former quarters.

and recruited from Maine and New Hampshire. Some 1813
of these prisoners were subsequently exchanged and
returned to duty on Lake Champlain.

The British had but three gunboats in action, not four as reported by Loomis. Each boat was armed with one 24-pounder and carried 60 men, all being under command of Lieutenant Lowe. The shore detachments were commanded by Captain Gordon and Lieutenant Williams and consisted, according to the commanding officer's report, of "the crews of two batteaux and row boats." A contemporary Canadian writer states that the total British force engaged in this affair did not exceed 108 men, and that some of the captured guns were formerly part of the armament of the *Alert* (twenty 18-pounder carronades), taken by the U. S. frigate *Essex* August 13, 1812.* The combined land and water attack was under the direction of Major George Taylor of the 100th (Prince Regent's) regiment. The *Growler* was taken to Isle aux Noix the same day and the *Eagle* the next day. Apart from his disregard of the wishes and advice of his superior, Lieutenant Smith showed poor judgment in proceeding so far down the river with the wind and current from the south and a narrow channel in which to work the sloops back to the lake. "I am decidedly of the opinion that the vessels would not have been lost had they not gone so far over the line into such narrow water, where the musketry of the enemy told from either shore."† Lieutenant Smith's conduct was

* Robert Christie's "Memoirs of the Administration of the Colonial Government of Lower Canada by Sir James Henry Craig and Sir George Prevost," Quebec, 1818.

† Macdonough to Captain Isaac Chauncey, March 10, 1815.

1813 afterwards made the subject of a court of inquiry, which found that the vessels were gallantly defended and not surrendered until further resistance was useless (see appendix, A). Major Taylor deserved credit for the prompt and efficient manner in which he took advantage of his adversary's predicament.

The capture of the Growler and Eagle was a severe blow and gave the British the immediate control of the lake. Macdonough retired with the President and the two gunboats to Burlington, where a strong force of regulars and militia was soon after assembled. A battery of two 12-pounders and some heavy guns protected the shipping in the harbor. Toward the end of June he received the following order:

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY TO MACDONOUGH

NAVY DEPARTMENT, June 17, 1813.

Sir; I have received your letter of the 4th instant announcing the unfortunate disaster and loss of the two sloops under the command of Lieutenant Smith as it would appear by the imprudence of that officer, of which, however, you will inquire into and report to me the result.

It now only remains to regain by every possible exertion the ascendancy which we have lost, for which purpose you are authorized to purchase, arm and equip in an effective manner two of the best sloops or other vessels to be procured on the lake. I have written to Commodore Bainbridge, commandant of the navy yard at Charlestown, Mass., to send on to you 20 18-pounder carronades, if to be procured, and you are authorized to make such requisitions as the service may require either on John Bullus Esq., Navy Agent, New York, and if not to be had there, upon Mr. Binney, the N. Agent at Boston, to whom, when you write, you will quote this authority.

You are to understand that upon no account are you to

suffer the enemy to gain the ascendancy on Lake Champlain, **1813**
and as you have now unlimited authority to procure the necessary resources of men, materials and munitions for that purpose, I rely upon your efficient and prudent use of the authority vested in you.

General Hampton, an officer of talent and energy, is appointed to the military command on Lake Champlain, with whom you will heartily co-operate in every measure calculated to promote the objects of the war. But you are to observe that the naval command is exclusively vested in you and for which you are held responsible. General Hampton will afford you every assistance in the quartermaster's department with mechanics, laborers &c., and if you deem it necessary to construct 4 or 5 barges of 50 or 60 feet long to carry a 12 or 18-pounder carronade, you are at liberty to do so.

I shall order a purser to your station immediately.

I am very respectfully yours etc.,

W. JONES.

This order was explicit and imperative. "Regain and retain control of the lake" was the pith of it. To do what was required and expected of him to meet the emergency called for a greater effort on Macdonough's part than had yet been put forth. Undismayed by the loss of practically two-thirds of his force he resolutely prepared to contest with the enemy his recently acquired superiority. Under the authority contained in the order of June 17 he purchased two sloops and fitted them out at Burlington. Captain Bainbridge being unable to furnish the 18-pounders from the Charlestown navy yard, John Bullus, navy agent at New York, was ordered to procure and forward either 18-pounders or long light 9's and 12's, the Secretary of the Navy impressing upon him at the same time the importance of filling Macdonough's requisitions

1813 promptly, "as the critical state of things on Lake Champlain by the unfortunate loss of the Growler and Eagle renders great exertions necessary in order to regain command of that lake." Captain Evans, of the Brooklyn navy yard, was directed to send 100 sailors to the lake, and a number of ship carpenters were hired at New York. It was so difficult to procure sailors that early in July Macdonough announced to General Hampton his intention of dismantling and laying up the two gunboats temporarily for lack of crews.

Meanwhile the Growler and Eagle, now the Broke and Shannon, had been repaired at Isle aux Noix. Hitherto this point had been simply a military base, but it presently became a naval headquarters also. Having now a superior force, the enemy planned a descent upon some of the towns on the American side of the line. There being no seamen at Isle aux Noix, the Broke, Shannon and gunboats were manned by a force of officers and sailors brought from Quebec by Captain Thomas Everard of the English sloop Wasp.

On July 29 about 1,000 men of the 13th and 100th regiments, under command of Lieutenant Colonel J. Murray, embarked on the Broke, Shannon, three gunboats and about forty batteaux and proceeded toward the lake. On the afternoon of July 31 the troops landed at Plattsburg and destroyed considerable property, the hastily gathered handful of militia offering no resistance. After leaving Plattsburg the batteaux and gunboats visited several other points on the lake and then returned to Isle aux Noix.

On the morning of August 2 the Broke, Captain

Everard, accompanied by the Shannon, Captain Daniel 1813
 Pring, and one gunboat, appeared off Burlington "to
 observe the state of the enemy's force there and to
 afford him an opportunity of deciding the naval supe-
 riority of the lake."* An eye-witness, in a letter pub-
 lished in the New York Spectator of August 25, 1813,
 thus describes and comments upon what followed.

"At half past two o'clock P.M. the two sloops and
 row galley, taking advantage of a light westerly breeze,
 came in towards the southerly part of this village with
 intention, no doubt, of destroying three public store
 houses erected upon the wharf and which he probably
 supposed were beyond the reach of a shot from our
 battery and naval force, which were anchored under
 the battery, consisting of only one sloop equipped and
 two others then in the hands of the carpenters, one of
 which had not her mast in and that of the other but
 just erected; both were unofficered, had but few men
 and guns on board and were placed there for defense
 only; two small gunboats each carrying one field
 twelve, and two or three scows. The enemy came
 within one and a half miles of the shore and commenced
 a cannonading which was returned by the vessels and
 battery and continued about twenty minutes, when
 the enemy, having received some well directed shots
 from the navy, hauled off, bearing southwardly.

"Soon after our vessels got under way in tow with
 boats and stood off from shore about two miles and
 fired one gun, as was understood, for the enemy to
 come to action without exposing our vessels in the
 broad lake in their unfinished state or to fall in with

* Captain Everard to Sir George Prevost, August 3, 1813.

1813 the enemy after a reinforcement should have joined him, it being well understood that a reinforcement lay concealed behind the islands or points of land a short distance out. Immediately after the gun from our vessels the enemy fired three signal guns. After our vessels had continued off about two hours, it being dark and no vessels in sight, they returned to their anchorage. The next morning the enemy's vessels were seen on the opposite side of the lake standing to the northward with one small sloop and two or three ferry boats which they had captured but which can be of little service to them.

"It is here considered by all men of judgment that the inhabitants on the borders of this lake are indebted to the judgment and prudence of the Commodore for their present safety, for had he imprudently pursued the enemy into the broad lake in the unfinished and unprepared state of our vessels at that time, we should most undoubtedly have lost our little navy and the enemy would have had the entire command of this lake for this season, if not longer; whereas, by the highly commendable conduct of the Commodore on that occasion our naval force is preserved and will, in a few days, resume the command of the lake and drive the enemy from its waters."

With reference to the condition of the American force at this time, a letter from Burlington dated August 5, 1813, and published in the Albany (N. Y.) Register, describes it as being "in no state of preparation and no officers but a captain." Macdonough himself writes that he was then "preparing" another force, thus plainly intimating that his vessels were in no shape for offensive service.

No damage was done at Burlington by either side in 1813 this affair. It is said that during the bombardment a ball entered the house where Macdonough was living and struck a dressing table at which he was shaving. I am rather inclined to doubt the truth of this story simply on the ground that if there were anything like a bombardment going on he would probably have been attending to more important matters than shaving himself. The enemy proceeded about ten miles south of Burlington the same day, captured and destroyed four small sailing vessels and returned to Canada August 3.

Mr. William James, the well known British naval historian, affects surprise that Macdonough, with his "very superior naval force", did not accept Captain Everard's challenge. What the "very superior naval force" was we have already seen. Captain Everard's two sloops and one gunboat, on the other hand, were fully armed and equipped and splendidly manned by the crew and officers of the sloop *Wasp*. Casting about for a reason for Macdonough's "forbearance" which would better suit his readers and himself, James finds one "consisting of *three* words only, copied into all the American histories of the late war that have passed through our hands. These three magical words are 'sloops of war', by which we are to understand that the two late American sloops, or cutters, *Eagle* and *Growler*, did, in a few days after they got into our possession, become metamorphosed into the size, force and appearance of 'two large sloops of war.' "* The American writers who termed the *Growler* and *Eagle*

* James' "Military Occurrences", I, 247.

1813 "sloops of war" might have retorted that they followed the example of James' countryman Lieutenant Colonel Murray, who spoke of them officially as "sloops of war" very soon after their capture.*

By great exertions Macdonough got his vessels ready for sea by August 20, but he was then without crews to man them. He was in the same predicament in this respect as Perry, who, the month before, had been imploring Chauncey to send him men enough to man his waiting squadron on Lake Erie. A draft of 50 men reached Burlington August 19 and about 200 more, with some officers, arrived early in September. By borrowing men from General Hampton he was able to re-enter the lake on September 6 with the following force:

Sloop President (flagship)	10 guns	{ 6 18-pd columbiads 4 12's
Sloop Preble	9 guns	{ 7 12's 2 18-pd columbiads
Sloop Montgomery	9 guns	{ 7 9's 2 18-pd columbiads
Sloop Frances	5 guns	{ 4 12's 1 18
Sloop Wasp	3 guns	12's
4 gunboats	4 guns	1 long 18 each
	—	
	40	

The armaments of these vessels are as given by Macdonough. Although included in the above table, two of the gunboats, built at Plattsburg, were not launched until October 9. They were built owing to the difficulty in navigating the north end of the lake

* Lieutenant Colonel J. Murray to Major General Sir R. H. Sheaffe, August 3, 1813.

with sailing vessels, the water being three feet lower 1813
than it was ever known to be before. The masts were taken out of the two old gunboats, their 12-pounders were replaced by long 18's, and each was given thirty oars. The *Frances* and *Wasp* were hired vessels and were used as armed tenders. They were small and sailed badly.

Early on the morning of September 6 Macdonough sailed from Burlington with his newly prepared force and stood toward the north, hoping to fall in with two sloops and three gunboats of the enemy which had come up as far as Gravelly Point, just north of Plattsburg. This was the American squadron's first appearance on the lake since the loss of the *Growler* and *Eagle*. Information being received at Plattsburg that the British had turned down the lake, Macdonough proceeded in the same direction and found them anchored near the line. On the approach of the American squadron the enemy got under way and stood down the Richelieu River, "thus, if not acknowledging our ascendancy on the lake, evincing an unwillingness (although they had the advantage of situation owing to the narrowness of the channel in which their galleys could work when we should want room) to determine it."* The British were not strong enough to risk an engagement with any hope of success, and Macdonough was too wary to allow himself to be drawn into the river in chase of the retreating foe. That imprudence had cost him two vessels already. The squadron returned to Plattsburg the same day.

Meanwhile the army was planning to invade Canada

* Macdonough to Secretary of the Navy, September 9, 1813.

1813 with Montreal as the objective point. On August 30 General Wilkinson wrote from Sackett's Harbor to the Secretary of War suggesting that General Hampton, who was in camp at Burlington, should, without delay, "cross the Champlain and commence his movement toward St. Johns, taking the Isle aux Noix in his route, or not, as circumstances might justify." The Secretary replied on September 6 that Hampton would be ready to move by September 20 and that he had ordered him to proceed directly against Isle aux Noix. On September 7 Hampton consulted with Macdonough as to the practicability of carrying out the Secretary's plan of a joint descent upon that point by water. Macdonough pointed out that such an attack upon so strongly fortified a position could be made successfully only by a decidedly superior naval force and disclaimed any such superiority for his squadron in the narrow waters of the river. The alternative plan of a land attack was then adopted by the War Department and the naval commander promised to keep the enemy's vessels north of the Canada line while General Hampton assembled his force at Cumberland Head.

"It is much to be regretted", wrote the Secretary of War to General Hampton a few days later, "that our naval means on Lake Champlain should have fallen so far short of their object. To *our* operations an ascendancy in the narrow parts of the lake is of infinite moment." This rather caustic criticism was only partially justified. Before the capture of the Growler and Eagle the naval force on Lake Champlain did all that was expected of it in the way of keeping the enemy within his own waters and convoying the troops. It is true

that the unfortunate loss of the two sloops gave the British temporary control of the lake and an opportunity for the descent on Plattsburg. Although not as strong, relatively, as before, the present force was powerful enough to accomplish its primary object (which was to maintain the naval ascendancy on the lake) and also to co-operate with the army. Any undertaking which was likely to result in the loss of this superiority by the capture or destruction of a part or the whole of the force was to be avoided. It was Macdonough's opinion, based on his knowledge of existing conditions, that if he entered the narrow channel of the Richelieu River to attack Isle aux Noix by water, almost certain disaster and the consequent loss of the naval supremacy on the lake awaited him, and that, therefore, such an attack ought not to be made. The Secretary's criticism was partly due, possibly, to a feeling of pique because his proposal was not favorably entertained. He was "always impatient", wrote Lossing, "when his opinions were disputed."

On September 19 General Hampton moved north from Cumberland Head with about 4,000 infantry, cavalry and artillery. "Orders were issued for the whole army, except a squadron of horse and the artillery, to embark in batteaux. The army got under way, preceded by the light corps and flanked on the right by the navy, and arrived at Chazy at 12 o'clock at night, lay on their arms, embarked again soon after sunrise the next morning, proceeded down the lake as far as Champlain and up Champlain River* the distance of four miles, where we landed and immediately

* Now Big Chazy River. — AUTHOR.

1813 marched to Odletown."* Hampton turned back before reaching Isle aux Noix and the " invasion " proved a dismal failure.

During the rest of the season we remained in quiet possession of the lake. The only incursion made by the enemy was on December 4, when about 400 men in six large galleys, under command of Captain Pring, landed at Cumberland Head and burned an empty store house, " the smoke of which gave the first intimation of his approach. It being calm we instantly weighed and swept in pursuit of him. Our galleys, four in number, under Lieut. Cassin, were directed to bring him, if possible, to action and thereby enable the sloops to get up. The chase continued three hours. I was much surprised to see him refuse battle. His superior number of sweeps prevented it. It is presumed the enemy expected we had gone into winter quarters and that Plattsburg was the object of his visit."† Soon after this, on December 21, the American squadron went into winter quarters at Vergennes, Vt., about seven miles up Otter Creek.

The President's recent message to Congress had contained a reference to the naval operations on some of the other lakes but did not mention Lake Champlain. In writing to the Secretary of the Navy in the latter part of December Macdonough remarked that he had noticed this omission and added: " I hope, sir, it will be considered that I have fulfilled the duties required of me on this lake and that I have merited the trust and confidence reposed in me by my government.

* Report of Colonel Robert Purdy to General Wilkinson

† Macdonough to Secretary of the Navy, December 5, 1813.

Since the completion of a force adequate to the meeting of our enemy he has never appeared except in predatory excursions at the most favorable times for him. I can assure you, sir, that we have always been prepared to repel or defeat him. We have frequently sought him and he has as frequently avoided us. * * * The flotilla under my command has, I am very conscious, always manifested a perfect willingness to see the enemy on fair terms. * * * Should you deem this letter improper, I beg you will consider it as emanating from feelings not at ease because it may be considered that I have not done that which it was in my power to do.” 1813

The Secretary replied that there was no reason for his uneasiness of mind — “ the President entertains the highest confidence in your capacity, zeal and patriotism, and is perfectly satisfied with your services ” — and that there was no intention of slighting him by mentioning more important operations elsewhere.

On July 24 of this year (1813) Lieutenant Macdonough was promoted to the rank of master commandant. From the nature of his command he was now very generally given the title of commodore, an unusual honor for so young a man. His duties were far from simple and called for the exercise of all his tact and talents. He was not only personally responsible for the maintenance of our naval supremacy on the lake but he was also expected to co-operate with the army, to prevent intelligence and succor from reaching the enemy, and to assist in suppressing smuggling. Since assuming command on the lake he had gained, to a remarkable degree, not only the good will but also the respect and confidence of the inhabitants

1813 of the surrounding towns and villages. His energy, judgment and ability were recognized by those who looked to him for the protection of their lives and property and they were by no means backward in expressing their appreciation of his qualities as a man and an officer.

There was at that time, and there may be now, an organization known as "The United States Military Philosophical Society" whose membership list contained the names of many men well known in the army and navy and in civil life. A meeting of the Society was held in Washington Hall, New York city, November 1, 1813, at which were present Colonel Jonathan Williams, president; Major General De Witt Clinton, mayor of New York; Brigadier General Jacob Morton, New York Artillery; Colonel Libbeus Loomis, New York Artillery; Colonel Peter Curtenius, New York Artillery; Lieutenant Colonel J. R. Fenwick, U. S. Army; Captain Samuel Evans, U. S. Navy; John Bul-
lus, U. S. navy agent; Colonel Charles Clinton; Captain John Hall, U. S. marine corps; Major Lloyd Beale, U. S. Army; Robert Fulton; Major W. Popham; Lewis Simond; and Major Anthony Bleeker, New York Artillery. Before adjourning the Society elected a number of new members, among whom were Captain Charles Morris; Masters Commandant James Biddle, Thomas Macdonough, Lewis Warrington, Joseph Bainbridge and Johnston Blakely; and Surgeon Shubrick, all of the U. S. Navy.

While matters were beginning to shape themselves on Lake Champlain for the decisive contest of the coming year, several important events occurred elsewhere.

Early in the year the British blockaded Chesapeake Bay; on January 17 the sloop of war *Viper*, Lieutenant John D. Henley, was captured by the British frigate *Narcissus*, Captain Lumly; on February 24 the American ship *Hornet*, Master Commandant James Lawrence, took the brig *Peacock*, Captain William Peake; on June 1 the frigates *United States*, Captain Stephen Decatur, and *Macedonian*, Captain Jacob Jones, with the sloop of war *Wasp*, Master Commandant James Biddle, were chased into New London, where the two frigates were blockaded until the close of the war; on the same day the frigate *Chesapeake*, Captain Lawrence, struck to the British frigate *Shannon*, Captain Broke; on August 14 the *United States* brig *Argus*, Master Commandant William H. Allen, was captured by the brig *Pelican*, Captain Maples; on September 5 the American brig *Enterprise*, Lieutenant William Burrows, took the brig *Boxer*, Captain Blythe; and on September 10 the *United States* squadron on Lake Erie, under Master Commandant Oliver Hazard Perry, captured the entire British squadron under Captain Barclay. There had been several encounters but no decisive action between the squadrons on Lake Ontario under Captain Isaac Chauncey and Captain Yeo.

1813

It will be remembered that while considerable material had been collected for building the six 74-gun ships authorized by Congress February 25, 1799, no vessels of that class had ever been laid down. On January 2 of the present year an act was passed authorizing the construction of four 74-gun and six 44-gun ships, and on March 3 several smaller vessels were provided for.

CHAPTER IX

1814

Vergennes as a naval base — British lay down a brig at Isle aux Noix — Battery at Rouse's Point contemplated — Reports concerning increase in enemy's naval strength — The *Saratoga* launched at Vergennes — Apprehended appearance of British on the lake — Vermont militia called out — Battery erected at mouth of Otter Creek — Enemy enter the lake — Attack on Otter Creek battery repulsed — The American force — Difficulty in fitting it out and manning it — Good wishes from Perry and Hull — Our squadron enters the lake — British build a ship and we build a brig — Enemy blockaded in Richelieu River — Exchange of courtesies between Macdonough and Captain Fisher, R. N. — Mr. Dulles describes his visit to the *Saratoga* as the Commodore's guest.

1814 NAVAL and military activity in the lake region had been principally confined so far to the great lakes. Lake Champlain was now to become the scene of important operations and the theatre of one of the greatest events of the war. Macdonough had gone into winter quarters at Vergennes. He had chosen that place after careful and deliberate consideration as being best adapted to his plans. He foresaw the probability of having to build additions to his force before again entering the lake and determined to prepare for the approaching campaign at a point which not only offered facilities for building and fitting out but was also inaccessible to the enemy. Vergennes filled both these conditions.

It was situated at the head of navigation on Otter Creek, seven miles from its mouth, with a road leading directly to Burlington, another to Boston, and one to the south. Among its industries were a blast furnace, an air furnace, eight forges, a rolling mill and a wire

factory, besides grist, saw and fulling mills. There 1814
 was timber in abundance for ship building, and free communication with the lake was provided by Otter Creek, which, while difficult to navigate because it was very crooked and quite narrow, varying in width from fourteen to twenty rods, was deep enough to accommodate large vessels. Vergennes was protected by the troops at Burlington, twenty-one miles away, against a land attack from the north; Dead Creek and its contiguous marshes opposed an effectual barrier on the west should the enemy attempt to land a force south of the mouth of Otter Creek; and the narrowness and crookedness of the latter stream precluded the possibility of a successful attack by water. Thus favorably situated, Macdonough could lay down and fit out his vessels with a reasonable certainty of not being molested.

Under date of January 28 he was authorized to build about fifteen gunboats, or a ship, or a ship and three or four gunboats, as he thought best. "The object is to leave no doubt of your commanding the lake and the waters connected, and that in due time. You are therefore authorized to employ such means and workmen as shall render its accomplishment certain."

As early as February 8 intelligence reached Vergennes that the enemy were building, at Isle aux Noix, a vessel to carry about 20 guns. "The British know", wrote Peter Saily, collector of customs at Plattsburg, to Macdonough February 12, "that they cannot conceal from us their exertions in building vessels in our vicinity. They may build, however, row galleys at Sorel, or even at a greater distance, and bring them to

1814 St. Johns in the Spring, there being but 12 miles land carriage and smooth road." Toward the end of the month the following instructions were forwarded from Washington:

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY TO MACDONOUGH

NAVY DEPARTMENT, Feb. 22, 1814.

Sir; Mr. Browne, ship builder, of New York, will have joined you some days since, from whom you will learn my anxious desire to complete the contemplated force on Lake Champlain. He engaged on the 14th instant to launch a ship of 24 guns on Lake Champlain in 60 days, and presuming that the alleged fact of the enemy having a ship of that class in great forwardness to be substantiated, I urged the propriety of building a ship without delay.

Yesterday Lieutenant Cassin arrived here and informed me that the enemy is not building a ship but some large galleys. You will therefore consult with Mr. Browne and vary your plan to meet the force and preparations of the enemy with decisive effect and with such description of vessels as you may deem most efficient and whose construction will admit of the greatest despatch.

Mr. Cassin says there is a new boat 120 feet long near Vergennes intended for a steamboat. If she will answer you are authorized to purchase her for the use of the navy. Can she not be armed with heavy guns under deck, the guns on either side to be opposite the space between the opposite ports, so that, as the vessel is probably narrow, the guns would not come in contact when roused in?

Two long 18-pounders and four 42-pd carronades were landed from the John Adams. I have directed those, with their carriages and implements complete, to be sent to you without delay.

I am respectfully, your obdt servt,

W. JONES.

THOMAS MACDONOUGH Esq.,

Commanding the U. S. Naval Force on Lake Champlain.

On March 4 Major General James Wilkinson, with 1814
Colonel Joseph G. Totten of the engineer corps, reconnoitred Rouse's Point. General Wilkinson sent Colonel Totten shortly after to examine the spot again with a view to establishing a post there, it being the latter's opinion that a heavy battery planted at that point would command the mouth of the river and prevent the enemy from coming out. Before anything was done in this direction Wilkinson, on March 30, made an unsuccessful attempt to capture Lacolle Mill, about five miles over the line, and then fell back on Chazy, Plattsburg and Burlington.

The enemy were now making every effort to take the initiative on the lake. Owing to the unusually mild weather the Richelieu River and the lower end of the lake up to Wind Mill Point were free from ice by April 2 and there was every indication that within a few days the entire lake would be open. Several of their vessels came out on April 2 and anchored off Rouse's Point, where, as Wilkinson wrote to Macdonough from Champlain April 5, "the want of cannon has prevented and still prevents my erecting batteries." The reports concerning the additions to the enemy's force were contradictory. "What has been its increase this Spring I know not", replied Peter Saily on April 6 to an inquiry from Macdonough, "except the ship, which I understand will be soon ready to display the British colors on this lake." The next day he wrote: "Capt. Thurber left my office this moment. He assures that there are no new British row galleys afloat and that two new ones only are building. Therefore the present force of the British is the same as last Fall, although it

1814 will be soon increased by their brig and afterward by their 2 galleys."

On April 11 Wilkinson wrote from Plattsburg to Macdonough: "I left Champlain the 9th inst. at which time from the concurrent reports of my secret agents the enemy's brig and other vessels were manned and equipped for service and a large number of batteaux had been collected at St. Johns and the Isle aux Noix." On the 18th Brigadier General Alexander Macomb wrote to Macdonough from Plattsburg: "I this moment have received intelligence from Capt. ———, who is employed to give information of the movements of the enemy. He has received information from an undoubted source that the new brig is not yet launched, that she is tarred and painted white, that the rigging is thrown over the caps, and will not enter the water until the 24th of the month; that only two row galleys are building and that their keels are laid and some ribs in, but not at all planked; that the sloop Mars mounts 6 six pounders and she is the only *addition* (ready) to the old establishment."

Meanwhile work had been going on briskly at Vergennes. Two new gunboats had been quickly put into the water, and on April 11 the 26-gun ship Saratoga was launched. Mr. Browne, the ship builder, had guaranteed to launch a ship of 24 guns in sixty days. He did even better. On March 2 the Saratoga's timbers were standing in the forest; on the 7th her keel was laid; and on the 11th of April she took the water — forty days from the living tree to the man-of-war.

On April 5 Wilkinson had sent word to Macdonough from Champlain that the enemy's squadron would be



MACDONOUGH IN 1814
(From a miniature painted in that year)

ready to sail in a few days and suggested the possibility 1814
of their landing 1,000 or 1,500 men for the purpose of
destroying his vessels. Peter Saily also wrote him
from Plattsburg on the 6th: "We are apprehensive
that they will pay us a visit in a few days and send us
some of their heavy balls unless they go first to the
mouth of Otter Creek and block you in. They may
take every sloop and other suitable boats on this lake,
load them with stones and sink them at the proper
place up the river and keep you where you are.
Whether the two points of land at or near the mouth of
that river can be fortified by strong batteries and keep
them off, you best know. I think the whole of the mer-
cantile shipping and transports ought to be kept to-
gether at some protected place until you can contest
the mastery of this lake. No batteries have been
erected nor can now at Rouse's Point nor nowhere to
impede the sailing of our enemy's floating force."

The activity of the British and their appearance off
Rouse's Point led General Wilkinson to believe that
there was imminent danger not only of an attack by
water on Plattsburg and Burlington but also of a de-
scent upon our naval force at Vergennes, and on April 9
he directed General Macomb, at Burlington, to request
Governor Chittenden to call out the Vermont militia
to protect the shipping on Otter Creek and strengthen
Macomb's force. The governor at once ordered out
the Franklin, Chittenden and Addison county men and
sent 500 of them to Burlington and 1,000 to Vergennes.
Wilkinson wrote Macdonough again from Plattsburg
April 11 that he hoped the enemy would confine them-
selves to "aquatic" operations only. "In such case

1814 you have nothing to apprehend, I presume, but his seizing on the shallops of the lake, loading them with stones and sinking them at the mouth of the creek to retard your movement. Permit me to suggest two precautions to prevent such a design. Seize and secure all the vessels along our shores, and plant a heavy battery at the mouth of the creek. I rejoice to hear of Governor Chittenden's promptitude in turning out his yeomanry to your assistance, and Brigadier General Macomb will co-operate with you in every practicable mode. If things will permit my absence I will run up in my gig and see you and return the same evening. I have a body of men at Chazy and am equipping a battery of flying artillery to wait on the enemy's vessels whenever the roads may permit."

On receipt of Wilkinson's note of April 5 Macdonough had made what preparations he could to protect his force in case of an attack. He landed some of his guns, erected batteries to cover his vessels and arranged for the shores of Otter Creek to be lined with musketry on short notice. Between April 16 and 20 Governor Chittenden and General Wilkinson were at Vergennes consulting with Macdonough as to the best measures to be taken for the protection of our naval force. It was thought that the enemy would probably try to keep our vessels in the creek by extending their line across its entrance or by obstructing it, and it was agreed to erect a battery at its mouth to provide against each contingency. Macdonough was to furnish the guns and Wilkinson directed Macomb to send on from Plattsburg an officer of the engineer corps to superintend the erection of the battery and 500 men to relieve

the Vermont militia. On the 20th Wilkinson and Macdonough went to the mouth of the creek and selected a site for the battery (which was subsequently called Fort Cassin), and on the 22nd Governor Chittenden directed that the militia be discharged (except Captain William C. Munson's company of Panton) on the arrival of the troops from Plattsburg (who came about four days later) with the understanding that they were to hold themselves in readiness to turn out immediately on hearing the alarm signal — three heavy guns fired in rapid succession. 1814

Apropos to the departure of the militia, Macdonough's office in Vergennes was directly over the guard room, and one day a musket was carelessly discharged in the latter, the ball passing through the ceiling and close to where Macdonough was sitting in the upper room. Turning to one of his officers he said with a smile, "I seem to be in more danger from the militia than from the enemy."

By May 9 the British flotilla was ready to assume the offensive. On that date Captain Daniel Pring ascended the *Richelieu* in the new 16-gun brig *Linnet* accompanied by five sloops and thirteen galleys and the next day came to anchor under Providence Island, where he remained until the evening of the 11th. On the morning of the 12th he appeared off Burlington, the next afternoon he passed Essex, and at daybreak of the 14th was off the mouth of Otter Creek. Major General George Izard, at Plattsburg, had notified General Macomb, at Burlington, on the 10th, of the approach of the enemy and had directed him to send word at once to Vergennes, which Macomb did at 10

1814 P.M. the same day. A detachment of 50 light artillerymen under command of Captain Thornton was hurried from Burlington by wagon to man the battery at the mouth of Otter Creek which consisted of seven 12-pounders on ship carriages. Lieutenant Cassin was ordered to support Captain Thornton with a body of sailors, and the infantry were advantageously posted to oppose the enemy should a landing be attempted. Captain Pring began his attack at daybreak on the 14th with the result communicated in the following report:

MACDONOUGH TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY

VERGENNES, 14th May, 1814.

Sir; I have the honor to inform you that an engagement between our battery at the mouth of Otter Creek and eight of the enemy's galleys with a bomb vessel has just terminated by the retreat of the enemy, who, it is supposed, came with an intention of blockading us.

The battery, commanded by Capt. Thornton of the artillery, who was gallantly assisted by Lt. Cassin of the navy, received but little injury although a number of shells were thrown and many shot lodged in the parapet.

Colo. Davis was advantageously posted to receive the enemy in the event of his landing, which we had reason to expect, as his new brig with several other galleys and four sloops were within $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles of the point on which the battery stands during the action which lasted one hour and a half, when they all stood off and were seen passing Burlington for the northward. Every exertion was made to get the vessels down to the mouth of the creek, which, however, we could not effect until the enemy had withdrawn. Our whole force is now at the creek's mouth with the exception of the schooner, and she will be down also in four or five days. . . .

I have the honor to be very respectfully your obt svt

T. MACDONOUGH.

HONBLE W. JONES,
Secretary of the Navy.

SAME TO SAME

1814

VERGENNES, May 18, 1814.

Sir; . . . I omitted stating in my letter of the 14th that the enemy had two fine row boats shot adrift from their galleys in the action with the battery, which, in their precipitate retreat, were left and picked up by us. I have since learned that in other parts of the lake they are much cut up by the militia. Two of their galleys in passing up a small river on the New York side had nearly all their men killed and wounded.

I have the honor to be very respectfully your obt servt

T. MACDONOUGH.

HONBLE W. JONES,
Secretary of the Navy.

The only damage we suffered in this affair was the dismounting of one gun, by which two men were slightly injured. "After this repulse the galleys entered the Bouquet River and ascended that stream for the purpose of seizing some government flour which had been deposited in the grist mill at the Falls. On their return the boats were fired into by a company of militia who had hastily collected on the south bank of the river near its mouth. This fire killed or wounded nearly all the men in the rear galley. The boat afterwards drifted into the lake and was towed off by small boats sent to its assistance."* The galleys then rejoined the other vessels and on the 16th Captain Pring returned to Isle aux Noix.

Within the next few days the American squadron was assembled at the mouth of Otter Creek. It consisted of the 26-gun ship *Saratoga*, the 16-gun schooner *Ticonderoga*, the 10-gun sloop *President*, the 9-gun

* Palmer's "History of Lake Champlain."

1814 sloop Preble, the 6-gun sloop Montgomery, and six gunboats of 2 guns each. The Saratoga, as we have seen, was launched April 11. The Ticonderoga was the vessel referred to in the Secretary of the Navy's letter of February 22 as having been intended for a steamboat. Before her engine and machinery were installed Macdonough bought her, made some necessary alterations, gave her a schooner rig, and launched her on May 12. Governor Tompkins, of New York, urged the Navy Department to equip this boat as a steam vessel of war, but his ideas were not considered practicable. The sloops were in service the previous year. The Ticonderoga's armament consisted of the guns of the Frances and Wasp and the four old gunboats, and some spare guns. The disarmed sloops, which were dull, miserable sailers, were returned to their owners. The four disarmed gunboats were either put in commission later or were replaced by new ones, as there were ten vessels of this class in the action of September 11. Each of the six new gunboats was 75 feet long and 15 feet wide, was armed with one long 24 and one 18-pound columbiad, and carried forty oars when fully manned.

There had been aggravating delays in the arrival of articles necessary to fit the vessels out. When the Saratoga was launched neither her guns, anchors, cables nor rigging had been received. The roads were so bad that the heavy loading of transport wagons was impossible. It took eighty teams to carry one consignment of naval stores from Troy to Vergennes and then three large cables were left behind. A large quantity of shot was brought from Boston and one thousand 32-pound balls were cast at Vergennes. By the first

week in May, however, most of the necessary equipment had arrived. But it was easier to fit out the squadron than to man it. Supplies could be had by waiting long enough, but it seemed almost impossible to secure enough seamen. Although recruiting offices were opened in New York and Boston and every other available source drawn upon, on May 5 the squadron was still considerably short of an effective working complement. “The powerful inducement of a large bounty offered in the army; the encouragement and high wages given by private armed vessels; the enhanced price of clothing, which, in the naval service, is charged to the seamen; and the hopeless prospect of prize money owing to the general destruction of captured property, combined to produce a state of things extremely inauspicious to the recruiting service.”* These remarks applied, of course, to recruiting generally and with no particular reference to either lake or ocean service, but the conditions here referred to added to those already mentioned were making it extremely difficult to ship men for service on the lakes.

Under instructions from the Navy Department Macdonough applied on May 5 to Major General Izard, at Plattsburg, for 250 men to help man his vessels. General Izard was as anxious for the squadron to come to his assistance as Macdonough was to get into the lake, so after some delay and being assured by Macdonough that he could not move without the men, Izard instructed General Macomb, at Burlington, to furnish them. Macomb had already lent the squadron several

* Secretary of the Navy to the Chairman of the Ways and Means Committee of the House of Representatives, February 8, 1815.

1814 hundred soldiers. On April 18 he wrote from Plattsburg to the naval commander: "I have ordered 400 men to march from this to Vergennes. They are Vermonters and probably are acquainted with the lake. If not, they can be taught."

Among the young officers ordered to Lake Champlain at this time was Midshipman Frank Ellery, who presented a note to Macdonough from Captain O. H. Perry. "I beg leave to introduce him to your notice", Perry wrote, "and ask for him your countenance as long as you find him deserving. Permit me to offer you my sincere wishes for your success in the ensuing campaign which, I am convinced, will be equal to your own and country's most sanguine expectation provided you have a fair opportunity." Another officer ordered to the lake was Lieutenant Drewry, who presented a letter from Captain Hull. "I suppose by this time you are on the lookout for a fight", said Hull. "I hope, my friend, you have good men and a plenty of them. If so and you fall in with John Bull I am confident he will come off *second* best. * * * Let me hear from you as often as you have leisure to write. I feel an interest in your situation and not less so for your health and honor. Make my best wishes to Mrs. Macdonough and believe me truly your friend, Isaac Hull." Good men and a plenty of them! The very day the letter was received Macdonough was asking General Izard to lend him 250 soldiers to get his vessels out of port.

On May 26 the Saratoga, Ticonderoga, Preble and six gunboats sailed out of Otter Creek, followed some time after by the President, Montgomery, and four

more gunboats. Three days later the squadron came 1814
to anchor off Plattsburg, from where Macdonough
made the following report:

MACDONOUGH TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY

U. S. SHIP SARATOGA AT ANCHOR OFF

PLATTSBURG, May 29, 1814.

Sir; I have the honor to inform you that I arrived off here to-day, and having been informed that the enemy had retired to the Isle aux Noix, the squadron was brought to an anchor. There is now a free communication between all parts of this lake and at present there are no doubts of this communication being interrupted by the enemy.

I find the Saratoga a fine ship. She sails and works well. She is a ship between the Pike and the Madison on Lake Ontario. The schooner is also a fine vessel and bears her metal full as well as was expected. The galleys are also remarkably fine vessels. I have not yet my complement of men, but as fast as they come on I shall relieve the soldiers whom I have on board by them. I have made it known to Maj. Gen. Izard that the squadron is ready for service.

I have the honor to be very respectfully your ob. servant

T. MACDONOUGH.

HON. WILLM JONES,
Secretary of the Navy.

The next few days were occupied in convoying the transports engaged in removing the troops and stores from Burlington to Plattsburg, where General Izard was assembling his forces and preparing to take a position near the Canada line. On June 11 Macdonough reported to Washington that the British had laid at Isle aux Noix the keel of a ship to at least equal the Saratoga and were bringing galleys from Quebec, and he recommended the building of a vessel of the brig or schooner

1814 class if it should be decided to increase his present force.* He reported the enemy to be lying under the protection of the guns of Isle aux Noix and announced his intention of proceeding in that direction. "If I can without very imprudently exposing my vessels", he added, "I shall endeavor to bring him to action." On June 12 the squadron convoyed as far as Chazy the boats containing the camp equipage of Brigadier General Smith's command and then went on down the lake in search of the British. A few days later Macdonough wrote to General Izard as follows:

MACDONOUGH TO MAJOR GENERAL IZARD

U. S. SHIP SARATOGA,

POINT AU FER. 17th June, 1814.

Sir; I have ascertained the position of the enemy's squadron to be so strong owing to the narrow water in which they are moored, and the shoalness of the water making it very hazardous for me to approach them with the ship unless under the most favorable circumstances, that I have, with the opinion of my officers and pilots, nearly come to a conclusion to go no further down. I would gain nothing but lose a great deal.

The enemy are close under Ash Island on which is a battery, and one brig, four sloops, nine galleys, and a large scow on which 'tis said are some heavy guns, are moored across the channel, so that I should be obliged to approach against their whole line with my vessels in a line ahead, or one vessel after another, and thus be exposed to their raking fire besides the strong probability of getting the ship aground. In addition to their force mentioned above, three galleys have been brought up to Isle aux Noix from Quebec and eight more are on their way, probably by this time near the island. This will

* The construction of an 18-gun brig was authorized July 5 by the Secretary of the Navy, who lamented the fact that he could "see no end to this war of broad axes."

give them twenty-one galleys besides a brig said to be in considerable forwardness at Isle aux Noix. They are repairing an old brig at the same place which will be ready in a short time, as a number of carpenters, sailors &c. have recently come to the island. 1814

This will be so large a force as to leave the ascendancy unquestionable, particularly in these waters, and as the Secretary of the Navy will no doubt order an increase of our force as soon as possible, will it not be advisable to have some guns on Cumberland Head or some other point for me to retire to in case I should be compelled to retire from so superior a force until the augmentation of our force shall be completed. I offer this from a conviction that the enemy will compel me to meet him under circumstances favorable to himself — that he will risk nothing, but will meet me with such a force as will insure him success. 'Tis better to save a force by retiring from a superior foe than to lose it even by hard fighting.

We lay in sight of each other. He knows his situation and my present superior strength. So we are, with this difference, however, that he has every nerve on the stretch in preparing his additional force. Point au Roche would probably be an eligible position for guns and they might be there better supported than on Cumberland Head. It would be a more favorable situation for the vessels to act in concert with the battery than the other. Be pleased to favor me with your opinion and intentions on this subject.

Very respect. I am with esteem, your obt. servt.

T. MACDONOUGH.

MAJ. GEN. IZARD

U. S. Army, Plattsburg.

General Izard replied on the 19th to Macdonough's suggestion by saying: "The absence of the chief engineer attached to this army prevents me from immediately determining on the propriety of occupying the Point au Roche, which you think the best for the protection of your vessels should a superior force make it

1814 necessary for you to retire from your present position. To-morrow, before night, a battery of four eighteen pounders shall be established on Cumberland Head near the point which we visited together, and from thence a further removal can be made as circumstances may make it advisable." It had been General Wilkinson's intention to erect a battery at Rouse's Point to command the mouth of the river and there was more or less correspondence between the Secretary of War and General Izard on the same subject, but the plan was finally abandoned as no longer practicable.

From now until the end of August the American squadron remained at the lower end of the lake blockading the British vessels in the Richelieu River. On June 28 Sailing Master Vallette destroyed, near the line, two spars which were being towed down the lake, presumably intended for the foremast and mizzenmast of the enemy's new ship, and on the night of July 7 Midshipman Abbot captured, four miles over the line, four more spars supposed to be the ship's mainmast and three topmasts. A large raft consisting of planks and spars and loaded with twenty-seven barrels of tar was taken by two of our galleys a mile from the line July 23 and six or eight of our worthy citizens who were found thereon were handed over to the civil authorities for trial on the charge of furnishing succor to the enemy. "Traitorous and diabolical traffic" the Burlington Centinel called it. By sending out detachments of marines from Isle aux Noix as guards, the masts for the new ship were finally secured. The keel of a brig to mount 20 guns had been laid at Vergennes July 23. She was launched August 11 and joined the squadron

off Chazy August 27. On August 25 the frigate *Confiance*, mounting 37 guns, was put into the water at Isle aux Noix and "the Commissary General and Quartermaster General, in order to expedite the new frigate (the *Confiance*), were directed to suspend every other branch of the public service which interfered with its equipment."*

Toward the end of August a pleasant little incident occurred in the shape of a formal exchange of courtesies between the commanders of the two squadrons as the following notes will show:

CAPTAIN FISHER TO MACDONOUGH

Captain Fisher begs the honor of presenting his compliments to Commodore Macdonough. He is extremely sorry that he gave him the trouble of sending all his flotilla after him this morning, but as the gunboats of the squadrons are about equal, there can be no difficulty in trying their strength on any morning between Point au Fer and Wind Mill Point.

Captain Fisher has to request the Commodore will excuse this note being written in pencil,† but he was in hopes, when he first made the signal of truce, that he might have met the Commodore in person; and he has also to beg this communication may be considered as private and not find its way into the newspapers.

OFF WIND MILL POINT,

MONDAY, Aug. 22d, 1814.

MACDONOUGH TO CAPTAIN FISHER

U. S. SHIP *SARATOGA*, August 22, 1814.

Capt. Macdonough regrets he did not know Commodore Fisher was with the truce this morning. It would have been

* Christie, p. 140.

† The note is written in pencil on a scrap of paper three and a half by four inches in size. — AUTHOR.

1814 pleasing to him to meet Commodore Fisher. It was not my intention to be unfair this morning. Two of our gunboats only were ordered to meet those of yours south of Point au Fer.

Our forces as to gunboats cannot be considered as equal, and taking into view the connection between the land and naval operations *at this time* on this lake, my government could not forgive an imprudence individually my own.

I am with sentiments of high respect your mo. ob. hum. servt.

T. MACDONOUGH.

COM. FISHER,

Comdg. H. B. M. Squadron, Lake Champlain.

CAPTAIN FISHER TO MACDONOUGH

TUESDAY AFTERNOON, Aug. 23d, 1814.

Dear Sir; I regret equally with yourself the circumstance which prevented my meeting you yesterday morning, as it would (and still will) give me much pleasure in the honor of being personally known to you.

I see fully how much your own movements may have to depend on those of your army and how little discretion may be left to you on this head, but in truth there can be no such inequality as to our force in gunboats, and, indeed, yesterday (as perhaps you might have seen) we had only nine and some of those of a small class. For the rest, if all we hear is correct, I am afraid you are entirely outbuilding us.*

I avail myself of this opportunity to send you the latest Montreal newspaper and also some English ones, which, tho' old, I believe are the latest that have reached this country; and if at any time I can execute here any little personal commission for yourself it will afford me much pleasure, being with great truth and esteem,

Your very sincere obdt humb. servt

P. FISHER (Captain).

CAPT. MACDONOUGH,

&c. &c. &c.

* Referring, no doubt, to the new brig launched August 11. — AUTHOR.

On August 27 the Commodore reported from off Chazy that he had with him at that time the 26-gun ship *Saratoga*, a 20-gun brig, the 17-gun schooner *Ticonderoga*, the 7-gun sloop *Preble*, the 6-gun sloop *Montgomery*, 6 gunboats of 2 guns each, and 4 gunboats of 1 gun each; total in guns, 92. The brig had been named the *Surprise* by her commander on his own authority, but on September 6 she was named officially the *Eagle*. No mention is made here of the *President*, probably because she was being used as a transport, as both she and the *Montgomery* were later. It will be noticed that another gun had been given the *Ticonderoga*, two guns taken from the *Preble*, and that four more gunboats were in commission.

Among the students at Yale College at this time was Joseph H. Dulles, of Philadelphia. The Fall vacation of his closing term gave him an opportunity of making a pleasure trip through Lake George and Lake Champlain. Bearing in mind President Dwight's injunction — "Young gentleman, in planning your journey you will remember to make allowance for Sabbaths and rainy days" — he arranged to spend a Sunday at Plattsburg. A friend in Burlington had given him a letter of introduction to Macdonough. "My letter being delivered to the commander of the squadron", Mr. Dulles writes, "I received an invitation to dine and spend the day on board the flagship on the following Sunday. That was the 4th of September, the day week before the battle of Lake Champlain. At the appointed hour the Commodore's gig was ready at the landing, and I found a companion for the trip, the chaplain of the army stationed at this military post,

1814 but who, for very obvious reasons, preferred to exercise his function on board the ship rather than among the soldiers. At noon divine services were performed, the commander and officers being seated on the quarter-deck, the chaplain at the capstan, and the crew, about 300 men, occupied the room from midships to the bow. All was orderly, and not only the officers, but the crew, showed such marked attention that I expressed my surprise to the Commodore. He replied, 'The men do behave well, but you must not be deceived by an inference that it is from pious feelings altogether', adding, with a smile, 'there are other considerations controlling their conduct.'

"I passed some time with the younger officers, nearer my own age, and was struck with the palpable evidence of the one pervading spirit of a master mind that ruled in that mass of volatile young men and the rude, man-of-war sailors. The cock, so celebrated in the history of the battle for flying up to the yard-arm and crowing lustily throughout the engagement, attracted my attention while he paraded the deck. To my simple question addressed to a little group of midshipmen, 'What do you think about the coming battle?' a young fellow replied, very modestly, 'We know the British force to be superior to ours, but we will do our duty.' There was at that fearful moment a calm, resolute composure in every word and on every face that assured me that all would be well.

"Retiring to the cabin, Commodore Macdonough conversed with singular simplicity and with the dignity of a Christian gentleman on whose shoulders rested the weightiest responsibility that bore on any man in that

period of our history. The conflict, inevitably to occur 1814 within a few days, was to decide the most important issues of the war. With the destruction of the American squadron on Lake Champlain, the British army was sure to make its way unobstructed to Albany, possibly to New York, and probably dictate the terms of an ignominious peace. That army, composed of 14,000 picked soldiers, fresh from victories in Spain and at Waterloo, commanded by a picked officer, the governor general of Canada, was on its march southward, supporting and being supported by the naval force on the lake. Macdonough was then 31 years of age, but seemingly several years younger, of a light and agile frame, easy and graceful in his manners, with an expressive countenance, remarkably placid. * * * The confidence of his officers and men in him was unbounded, and such as great leaders only can secure. While awaiting the dinner hour he entered freely into conversation on religious services in the navy, and, among other things, remarked that he regarded the Epistle of St. James as peculiarly adapted to the sailor's mind; the illustrations drawn from sea life — such as 'He that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind', and 'Behold the ships, though so great, are turned about with a very small helm' — are very striking, and then the plain and forcible manner in which the ordinary duties of life are taught, and the sins of men are specified and condemned, are easily comprehended, even by men as little instructed as seamen usually are. My youthful ears were all attention to such language and in such associations.

"At dinner a blessing, being invited, was offered by

1814 the chaplain, and it appeared to be no unusual thing. A considerable number of the officers attached to the other vessels were present by invitation, as I was told, given in rotation. In the midst of the meal the Commodore, calling attention, said, 'Gentlemen, I mean the sailor gentlemen, I am just informed by the commander of the army that the signs of advance by the British forces will be signalled by two guns, and you will act accordingly.' He retired from the table early and the conversation became more unrestrained, and when one of the lieutenants enforced some remark with an oath, an officer sitting near him immediately exclaimed, 'Sir, I am astonished at your using such language. You know you would not do it if the Commodore was present.' There was a dead pause, and a seeming acquiescence in the propriety of the rebuke, severe as it was. At the close of the day the strangers were brought on shore and the men of the squadron left in hourly expectation of a battle."

CHAPTER X

1814

British prepare to invade New York — American plans to repel invasion — Control of the lake the key to the situation — British advance by land and water — American gunboats in skirmish at Dead Creek — British army on north bank of Saranac River — Commodore Downie proceeds up the lake — American naval force — British naval force — Macdonough's preparations for receiving attack.

EARLY in the year the British had begun to strengthen 1814
their land force in the vicinity of Lake Champlain. Napoleon's abdication made available for service elsewhere Wellington's magnificent army which had brought low the eagles of France. In July and August not less than 15,000 troops, chiefly from the Peninsula, arrived at Montreal, all of whom were retained for the invasion of New York except one brigade which was sent farther west. These men were veterans of the Douro and the Tagus, the Ebro and Garonne. They were part of "an unrivalled army for fighting", as Wellington had described them the year before. By September 3 Sir George Prevost, governor of Lower Canada and commander-in-chief of the forces, had assembled between 11,000 and 14,000 men at Champlain. It was thought by some that it was his intention to drive this force, like a wedge, along the line of Lake Champlain and Lake George, through Albany and down the valley of the Hudson and split New England from the rest of the Union. "From information received, and corroborated by the movements of the enemy", said Governor Tompkins in his address

1814 to the New York legislature September 27, "there were sufficient grounds of belief that one great object of his campaign was to penetrate, with his northern army, by the waters of Lake Champlain and the Hudson, and, by a simultaneous attack with his maritime force on New York, to form a junction which should sever the communication of the states." It is more likely, however, that Prevost was instructed to seize and occupy Crown Point or Ticonderoga, or both, with the ulterior motive of turning their possession to account in the pending negotiations for peace. To Captain George Downie, late of the Montreal on Lake Ontario, but commanding the British squadron on Lake Champlain since September 3, was entrusted the responsibility of supporting the left flank of the army on its advance along the west side of the lake.

Meanwhile preparations had been made on the American side to repel the threatened invasion. After the unfortunate affair at Lacolle Mill in March, General Wilkinson was relieved of his command and was succeeded by Major General Izard. During the summer there were several encounters between the British and American forces in the vicinity of the line but no important engagement occurred. Early in August Izard's army, which had been gradually strengthened, was holding positions at Plattsburg, Chazy and Champlain. At a moment when there was every indication that a battle would soon be fought which would decide the fate of the campaign and the control of the country bordering on the lake, General Izard was suddenly ordered by the Secretary of War to proceed with a large part of his force to Sackett's Harbor. He accordingly started

thither August 29 with 4,000 men, leaving General 1814
 Macomb to make the best stand he could with the handful of men who remained. Macomb at once concentrated his whole force (1,500 effective regulars) at Plattsburg, called in the New York and Vermont militia, and prepared to resist the British advance. His right was supported by the American squadron which had retired from its position near the line to Plattsburg Bay September 1.

The success of Prevost's plan of invasion was dependent upon Downie's ability to destroy Macdonough's force or to so cripple it as to render it harmless. Sir George could not advance and leave a hostile force in his rear capable of harassing his left flank and of cutting his communication with Canada. The control of the lake was the key to the situation and Macdonough realized it. He did not propose to give up without a struggle what had cost him so much labor to secure. He appreciated fully the responsibility of his position and the results which would follow his failure to equal the emergency.

Several government batteaux loaded with provisions were left at Chazy by General Izard when he withdrew August 29, and on the same day Macdonough suggested to Macomb that the supplies had better be removed. That night the latter sent an officer and 75 men to Chazy after the stores and the next day advised Macdonough that he had done so, adding, "I have also ordered the troops at Cumberland Head to join the garrison at this post as you are now strong enough to take care of yourself; and beside, if the heavy guns at the Head were to fall into the hands of the

1814 enemy, they might very readily be employed in annoying you at the various passes of the lake. Under this conviction I have thought it prudent to evacuate the Head and bring away the garrison and guns."

On September 1, at 10 A.M., Macomb notified Macdonough, who was lying north of Cumberland Head, that the enemy had advanced to Champlain and said: "I have withdrawn the guns and garrison from Cumberland Head. Would it not be well for your whole flotilla to drop down to the Head, so that in case the enemy should march by the Dead Creek road the galleys could annoy him in passing the beach and in other respects might afford us assistance." The squadron retired to Plattsburg Bay the same day. On the 4th the main body of the enemy reached Chazy and the next night encamped near Sampson's, about eight miles from Plattsburg. At the same time Captain Pring, with the British gunboats, left Isle aux Noix (on the 3rd), moved up the lake as far as Isle la Motte and erected (on the 4th) a battery of three long 18-pounders on the west side of the island, opposite Chazy, to cover the landing of supplies for the troops.

On the morning of the 6th, before daylight, the British troops advanced in two columns, one by way of the Beekmantown road and the other by the road over Dead Creek bridge and along the beach at the north end of Plattsburg Bay. When the left column reached Dead Creek at 10 A.M. it was checked by a galling fire from the gunboats which had been ordered to the mouth of the creek on the 5th at Macomb's request. The enemy soon brought up their artillery, however, which opened fire from screened positions in the

woods upon the exposed gunboats. The accuracy of this fire and a heavy sea which prevented the latter from bringing their guns to bear made it prudent for them to withdraw. Lieutenant Silas Duncan, of the *Saratoga*, was sent in a gig to order the gunboats to retire. As Duncan approached, the enemy's fire was concentrated on his boat and he was severely wounded, but he pluckily delivered his orders to Sailing Master Robins of the *Allen*. One of the gunboats drifted under the British guns but was eventually brought off with the others. The boats sustained a loss of one killed and three wounded. The day previous Macdonough had appointed Midshipman Duncan acting 3rd lieutenant of the *Saratoga*. The young officer lost his right arm in the gunboat engagement and afterwards received the thanks of Congress for his gallant behavior on this occasion.

Both the British columns reached the north bank of the Saranac River on the 6th, the American skirmishers falling back slowly before them. From then to the 10th Prevost was engaged in bringing up his guns and supplies and in preparing his approaches. The American vessels were in plain view and he sent a message back to Captain Downie informing him of their number, disposition and armament. Captain Downie joined Captain Pring at Isle la Motte on the 8th with the rest of his force. The *Confiance* grounded as she was coming up the Richelieu River the day before but was hauled off without injury. At daylight on the 11th the entire British squadron weighed anchor and stood up the lake with a fair breeze from the northeast.

The American force consisted of the 26-gun ship

1814 Saratoga, Master Commandant Thomas Macdonough; the 20-gun brig Eagle, Master Commandant Robert Henley; the 17-gun schooner Ticonderoga, Lieutenant Stephen Cassin; the 7-gun sloop Preble, Lieutenant Charles Budd; the gunboats Allen (Sailing Master William M. Robins), Burrows (Sailing Master Samuel Keteltas), Borer (Midshipman T. A. Conover), Nettle (Midshipman S. L. Breese), Viper (Lieutenant Francis J. Mitchell) and Centipede (Sailing Master D. V. Hazard) of 2 guns each, and the Ludlow (Master's Mate John Freeborn), Wilmer (Sailing Master Daniel S. Stellwagon), Alwyn (Acting Sailing Master Bancroft) and Ballard (Master's Mate Stephen Holland) of 1 gun each. Neither the President nor the Montgomery were in the action. They were being used as transports and on the 11th the Montgomery was at Burlington and the President was twenty miles south of Plattsburg, with her guns on shore, repairing damages received in a heavy blow on the 7th. Both vessels were pressed into service to carry troops from Burlington and other points on the lake to Macomb's support; otherwise, and had it not been for the accident to the President, they would no doubt have taken part in the engagement, for Macdonough needed every gun he could command.

Unfortunately there is no official report of the number of men on board the American vessels at the time of the action. On May 23, 1815, Purser George Beale, Jr., prize agent, submitted to the Secretary of the Navy a plan for the distribution of the prize money. This plan, which the Secretary approved, shows that the whole number of persons attached to the squadron on

September 11 was 1,049. On March 20, 1815, Mac- 1814
donough sent to the Secretary of the Navy a "Roll of
seamen &c in the squadron on Lake Champlain in the
action of 11 Sept., 1814, entitled to three months extra
pay by act of Congress passed 20th Octr, 1814." This
roll (now in the office of the Fourth Auditor of the
Treasury) contains the name of every person below
the ranks of midshipman and sailing master as required
by the act of Congress referred to (see appendix L).
Beale's figures and the roll, considered together, show
that the force was composed as follows:

Commissioned officers of the navy and sailing masters ..	62
Midshipmen	39
Petty officers	31
Seamen, ordinary seamen, landsmen and boys.....	660
Commissioned officers of the army acting as marines	6
Non-commissioned officers of the army acting as marines,	10
Privates of infantry acting as marines	241
	1,049

There have been conflicting statements as to the
precise number on board the vessels during the action.
The following table shows the figures given by the best
known writers on both sides, but their figures are not
supported by any authorities:

	Cooper	Roosevelt	Lossing *	James
Saratoga	212	240	...	250
Eagle	150	150	...	142
Ticonderoga	110	112	...	115
Preble	30	30	...	45
10 gunboats	350	350	...	346
Marines	...	...	...	52
	852	882	882	950

* Gives total only.

1814 The Burlington (Vt.) Centinel of September 16 says: "The following account of the force and loss on board the British and American fleets was received by a gentleman in this place directly from Commodore Macdonough and put on paper on the spot and may be relied on as correct so far as his indefatigable attention to the wounded and the burial of the dead and the fidelity of the British officers have enabled him to ascertain the facts." (See appendix, D.) The American force is there stated to be — Saratoga 210 men, Eagle 120, Ticonderoga 110, Preble 30, ten gunboats 350; total 820. The Centinel's account contains internal evidence (such as the uncorrected number of the Eagle's wounded) that Macdonough gave out the figures before writing his official report (see appendix, B), and the slight differences between them and the latter, which left Plattsburg the 13th, are natural and easily explained. The accuracy of the American commander's unofficial statement of the number of his vessels, guns, killed and wounded is a logical reason for accepting his statement of the number of men as also correct, especially as there is not a particle of evidence to the contrary. I have therefore considered the American force actually engaged as numbering 820, including seamen and soldiers. The composition of the force shows that the latter must have been included in this number. Of the remaining 229 men, some formed the crews of the President and Montgomery, others were in the hospital, a number were on recruiting service and other shore duty, and several had recently been released from the jail at St. Albans and were not in the action, as is shown by notations on the purser's pay roll.

The tonnage of the American vessels can only be **1814** estimated. Macdonough said the Saratoga was "between the Pike and the Madison on Lake Ontario." As the Pike was 875 tons and the Madison 593, this would make the Saratoga 734 tons. The Eagle was about the size of the Lawrence and Niagara on Lake Erie, or 480 tons. The Ticonderoga was about 350 tons, and the Preble about 80. The six large gunboats were about 70 tons each, and the four small ones about 40 tons each.

The American force consisted, then, of the following vessels:

AMERICAN SQUADRON

	Tons *	Crew	Guns	
Ship Saratoga	734	210	26	{ 8 long 24's 6 42-pd carronades 12 32-pd carronades
Brig Eagle	480	120	20	{ 8 long 18's 12 32-pd carronades
Schooner Ticonderoga	350	110	17	{ 8 long 12's 4 long 18's 5 32-pd carronades
Sloop Preble	80	30	7	long 9's
6 gunboats †	420	246	12	{ 1 long 24 1 18-pd col- } each umbiad
4 gunboats ‡	160	104	4	1 long 12 each
	<u>2,224</u>	<u>820</u>	<u>86</u>	

The British force consisted of the 37-gun frigate *Confiance*, Captain George Downie; the 16-gun brig *Linnet*, § Captain Daniel Pring; the 11-gun sloops *Chub*,

* Estimated.

† Allen, Burrows, Borer, Nettle, Viper, Centipede.

‡ Ludlow, Wilmer, Alwyn, Ballard.

§ In breaking out the *Linnet's* hold six months later two long 18's, eleven long

1814 Lieutenant James McGhie, and Finch, Lieutenant William Hicks; five gunboats of 2 guns each and seven of 1 gun each. The Chub and Finch were the Broke and Shannon; before that the Growler and Eagle, captured from us June 3, 1813. The American official report mentions 13 gunboats, but this is evidently a mistake. The London Naval Chronicle (Vol. xxxii, p. 245) contains a list of the English gunboats on Lake Champlain in August, 1814, which foots up 12. Sir George Prevost, who no doubt knew exactly what force Downie had, mentions the same number in his report to Earl Bathurst. A store sloop accompanied the British vessels and it is quite likely that she was erroneously included in the count of the gunboats.

There was no official report published of the number of men in Downie's squadron. The following table shows the strength of the British crews according to the writers already quoted in connection with the American force:

	Cooper	Roosevelt	Lossing *	James †
Confiance	300 +	about 325		270
Linnet	80 to 100	„ 125		80
Chub	about 40	„ 50		40
Finch	„ 40	„ 50		30
12 gunboats	„ 530	„ 387		294
	about 1,000	about 937	1,000 +	714

Lossing quotes a statement made to him personally by Admiral Hiram Paulding, who was a midshipman on

12's, fifteen heavy swivels and a quantity of shot were found, placed there for ballast.

* Gives total only.

† Gives British but 10 gunboats.

the Ticonderoga, that the enemy's gunboats averaged 1814 50 men each. James attempts to show that the number of men actually engaged was but 537, with a correspondingly inferior force in vessels and guns, but Roosevelt, in his " Naval War of 1812 ", points out the weakness of James' position and the utter absurdity of such a claim. The Burlington Centinel (see appendix, D) gives the *Confiance* 300 men, the *Linnet* 120, the *Chub* and *Finch* 40 each, and 11 gunboats 550; total 1,050. Captain Pring reported to Sir George Prevost the same figures for the four larger vessels. The statement that the crew of the *Confiance* numbered 300 is also corroborated by Midshipman Lea of that vessel (see appendix, H). The *Chub* and *Finch* had 50 men each when captured from us the year before, and no doubt 80 men for the two vessels is within the actual number. With the *Linnet's* crew of 120 we have exactly 500 men for the four larger vessels.

The same result can be reached in a different way. The Centinel's 110 wounded are included, doubtless, in the 367 prisoners who were sent to Greenbush (except Captain Pring) and the 47 wounded men paroled mentioned in Macdonough's official report. Now, by adding to the prisoners (367) and the wounded men paroled (47) the Centinel's 84 dead, we have 498 men for the four larger vessels or within two of the number stated by the Centinel and Captain Pring. I have therefore accepted 500 men as an aggregate of the crews of the frigate, brig and sloops.

As to the gunboats, the number, of course, should be 12, and Macdonough's average of 50 men to each boat is supported by Admiral Paulding's statement to Loss-

1814 ing to the same effect. It is probable, then, that the number of men in the British gunboats was 600. This seems the more likely when it is remembered that their crews were largely composed of soldiers, who could easily be drawn in any number from Prevost's great army. James makes the figures considerably less, even allowing for the two gunboats he does not mention. He underestimates the strength of the four larger vessels by just 16 per cent. Adding 16 per cent to his gunboat figures we have 347 instead of 294 men for ten boats, or an average of 35 to a boat, and adding 70 for his two missing boats we get a total of 417. While these figures are probably too low, I shall use them in order to avoid, if possible, an overestimate of the British force. This gives a total of 917 as the strength of Downie's squadron.

The *Confiance* was carried for several years on the navy list in the class with the frigates *Constellation*, *Congress* and *Macedonian*, rated as 36's, which would make her over 1,200 tons. Cooper says she was "nearly double the tonnage of the *Saratoga*." She had the gun deck of a heavy frigate, no spar deck, but a spacious topgallant forecastle and a poop which extended to the mizzenmast. She carried a furnace for heating shot. James indignantly denies it, but unreasonably. It was not only true but a perfectly legitimate advantage. The *Linnet* was about the size of the *Ticonderoga*, 350 tons. The *Chub* was 112 and the *Finch* 110 tons respectively. The five large gunboats were about 70 tons each and the seven small ones about 40 tons each. Downie, then, had the following force:

BRITISH SQUADRON

1814

	Tons *	Crew	Guns
Frigate Confiance	1,200	300	37 { 27 long 24's 4 32-pd carronades 6 24-pd carronades
Brig Linnet	350	120	16 long 12's
Sloop Chub	112	40	11 { 10 18-pd carronades 1 long 6
Sloop Finch	110	40	11 { 6 18-pd carronades 4 long 6's 1 18-pd columbiad
3 gunboats	210	417	6 { 1 long 24 1 32-pd car- } each ronade
1 gunboat	70		2 { 1 long 18 1 32-pd carronade
1 gunboat	70		2 { 1 long 18 1 18-pd carronade
4 gunboats	160		4 { 1 32-pd car- } each ronade
3 gunboats	120		3 1 long 18 each
	2,402	917	92

Each squadron was more or less deficient in equipment, but this disadvantage was common to both. Captain Pring referred specifically in his report to Sir James Yeo (see appendix, E) to the lack of gun locks on the Confiance, but 37 of them are mentioned in the marshall's libel of that vessel. It is possible, of course, that some of them did not fit and could not be used. It is but fair to say that the Confiance, which was only six-

* Estimated.

1814 teen days off the stocks, could, and doubtless would, have been better prepared had Downie been given more time. On the other hand the American brig *Eagle* had been only thirty days in the water, had but recently joined the squadron, and was ready for service only eight days before the *Confiance*. The British were fortunate in having plenty of sailors, strong detachments of whom had been sent from Quebec. Plenty of soldiers were to be had both for the large vessels and the gunboats. The 39th regiment supplied a considerable portion of the latter's crews, and a detachment of 60 or 70 men of the 3rd battalion, Canadian militia, under Captain Daly and Lieutenant Hercules Olivier, was distributed in three of the boats. By substituting seamen, as fast as they reached the lake, for the soldiers he had borrowed, Macdonough reduced the number of the latter to 257 officers and men, who acted as marines. There was some excellent material in the American crews. Sailing Master Vallette, while recruiting in New York, sent up a draft in March whom he called "very good", and he described another draft in May as "the best men that have been shipped in New York this some time."

There was no lack of confidence on either side. A Canadian writer, Sir E. P. Taché, who was also an eyewitness of the battle, says: "English writers have made use of many excuses to explain the defeat of our squadron on Lake Champlain in 1814. No one, however, has dared to confess the true reason — the too high opinion we entertained of ourselves and our underestimate of the bravery of our enemies." Christie, a countryman of Downie's, writes: "The strongest con-

1814
 fidence prevailed in the superiority of the British vessels, their weight of metal, and in the capacity and experience of their officers and crews." Captain Downie is reported by his own writers to have said that he considered the *Confiance* a match for the whole American squadron. Under certain conditions this was true. "If Macdonough could be brought to action on equal terms as to position — that is, under sail on the open lake — he would be inferior to the British for the same reason that Yeo, through most of 1813, was inferior to Chauncey on Ontario. As the General Pike was there superior to the whole British squadron, under way, so in like circumstance was the *Confiance* superior to Macdonough's entire command."*

The prevailing winds on Lake Champlain are from the north or south. As the lake vessels were poor sailers on the wind owing to their shallow draught and flat bottoms, it was almost certain that Downie would come up the lake with a northerly wind. He would then, however, be forced to enter the bay with his vessels close hauled, their worst point of sailing, and as soon as he got under the lee of Cumberland Head would find the breeze light and fitful. He could not afford the time, nor would it be safe, to lie outside and wait for a southerly wind. With these conditions in mind and assuming that Downie would come up and attack with a northerly wind, Macdonough decided to await the enemy at anchor in Plattsburg Bay and made his arrangements accordingly. Plattsburg, or Cumberland, Bay extends north and south. It is bounded on

* Captain A. T. Mahan, U. S. N., in his "War of 1812" (Scribner's Magazine, January, 1905).

1814 the west and north by the main land and on the east by Cumberland Head. Its principal entrance is between Cumberland Head and Crab Island. The distance between these points is two and three-tenths miles. Shoals extend one-sixth of a mile southwest from Cumberland Head and one-fifth of a mile northeast from Crab Island. The narrower entrance between Crab Island and the main land is not quite a mile wide. The distance from Plattsburg to the nearest point on Cumberland Head is two miles. The Eagle, Saratoga, Ticonderoga and Preble, in the order named, were secured in a line ahead from north to south, something over a mile east of the batteries at Plattsburg. The Eagle lay well south of the mouth of the Saranac River,* and the Preble was about a mile and a half off Crab Island. Each vessel was provided with springs, i. e., hawsers attached to the bow anchor or its cable and extended along the length of the vessel to the stern. By hauling on the port or starboard spring the vessel could be canted one way or the other. Stern anchors were also provided in case of emergency. As a further precaution, a kedge anchor was planted broad off each bow of the Saratoga with a hawser leading from each quarter to the kedge on that side. Thus the control of the direction of broadsides, the possibility of a shift of wind, and the means for winding ship, if necessary, were all provided for. As it turned out, these very precautions saved the day. The gunboats, under sweeps and sails, were stationed about forty yards west of the larger vessels in a line abreast — three off

* The Eagle's log shows that she took her position in the line on the 7th, with Crab Island bearing about south-southwest, distant two miles.

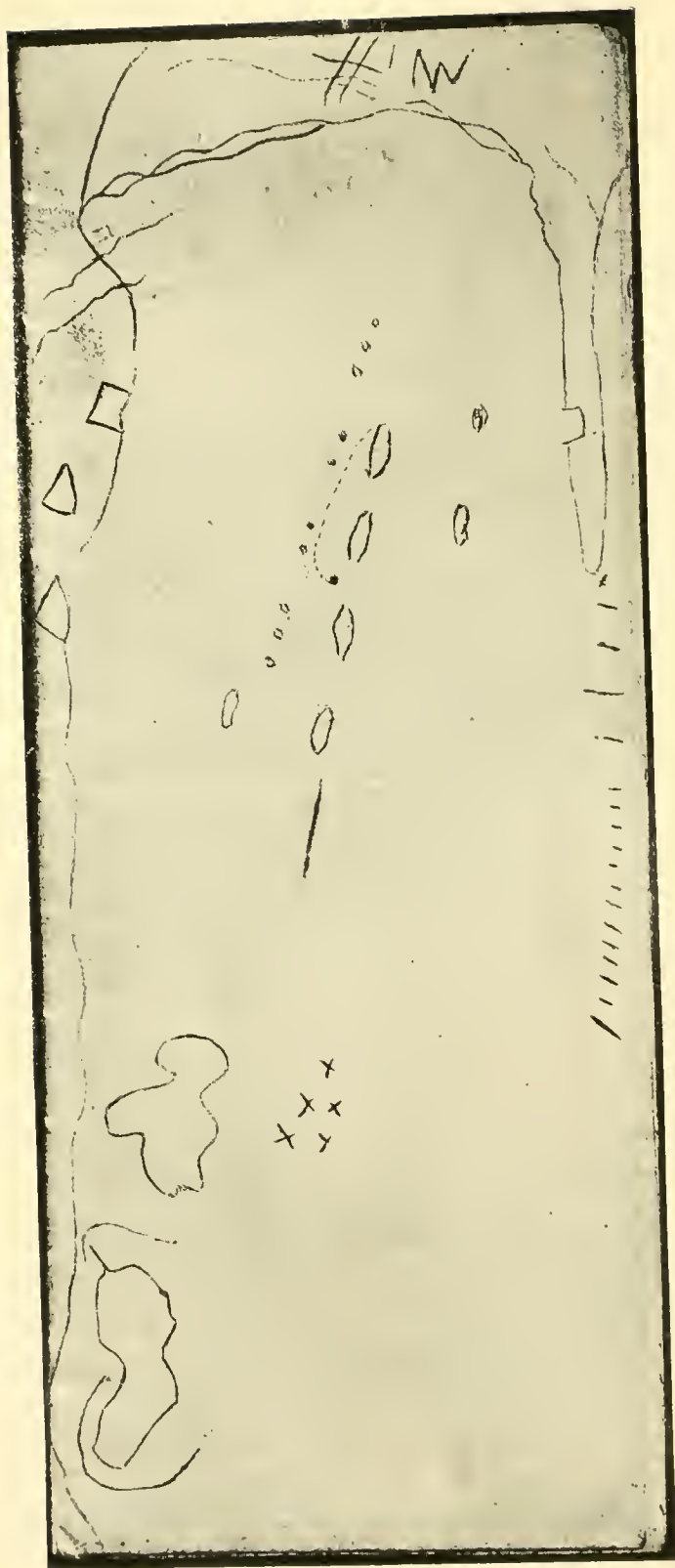


PLATE I

THE COMMODORE'S PENCIL SKETCH (SLIGHTLY REDUCED) OF THE
POSITIONS OF THE BRITISH AND AMERICAN SQUADRONS BEFORE
AND DURING THE ACTION OF SEPTEMBER 11, 1814

the port bow of the Eagle, two between the Eagle and the Saratoga, two between the Saratoga and the Ticonderoga, and three between the Ticonderoga and the Preble. One division, comprising the Borer, Nettle and Viper, was commanded by Lieutenant Mitchell; another division, comprising the Allen, Centipede and Burrows, was commanded by Sailing Master Robins; another division, comprising the Wilmer and Ballard, was commanded by Sailing Master Stellwagon; and another division, comprising the Ludlow and Alwyn, was commanded by Acting Sailing Master Bancroft. The sick had been removed from Plattsburg at the approach of the British and taken to a temporary hospital on Crab Island. A 6-pounder was mounted on the north side of the island to be manned, if necessary, by some of the invalids. 1814

Plate 1 is a reproduction (slightly reduced) of a pencil sketch made by Macdonough on the back of a letter from Andrew William Cochran, Acting Deputy Judge Advocate to the British forces, inquiring the position of the American vessels during the action (see appendix, I). With Cochran's question in mind he probably indicated the relative positions of his vessels and the batteries correctly although he was evidently not drawing by scale. The line is here shown to be a little over half way from Plattsburg to Cumberland Head. As the distance between these points is two miles, we may fairly assume that the line was a little over a mile from the Plattsburg batteries, as already stated. The Commodore's sketch is more likely to indicate the true distance of the squadron from the western shore than the letter he wrote to Cadwallader R. Colden in which

1814 he estimated the distance at a mile and a half (see appendix, K). Plate 2 shows the positions of the British and American vessels before and during the action.

Authorities differ as to whether the American vessels were within range of the land batteries. General Macomb thought they were not. Prevost reported that they were anchored "out of gun shot from the shore". Cooper is non-committal. Lossing is silent, and Roosevelt puts them "out of range of the shore batteries" but considerably east of their actual position. The *New England Palladium* of March 24, 1815, contains the item: "A gentleman from the frontier informs that several British officers had visited and dined with Gen. Macomb at Plattsburg. At their request experiments, it is said, were made from the forts to ascertain whether, if the British had taken them, they could have annoyed Com. Macdonough's fleet, and it was found they could not." On the other hand, Sir James Yeo believed that the American line was within reach of the shore batteries and James agreed with him. The assumption that such was the case was the basis of the former's subsequent charges against Prevost (see appendix, G). In bringing General Macomb's opinion to Macdonough's attention, Cadwallader Colden gave the latter an opportunity to express his own views on the subject, and his silence on that point might easily indicate dissent from the general's opinion. Captain Mahan discusses the point at length in his admirable "Sea Power in Its Relations to the War of 1812." Taking everything into consideration, the conclusion seems to be justified that the American squadron, while not within ordinary fighting range of

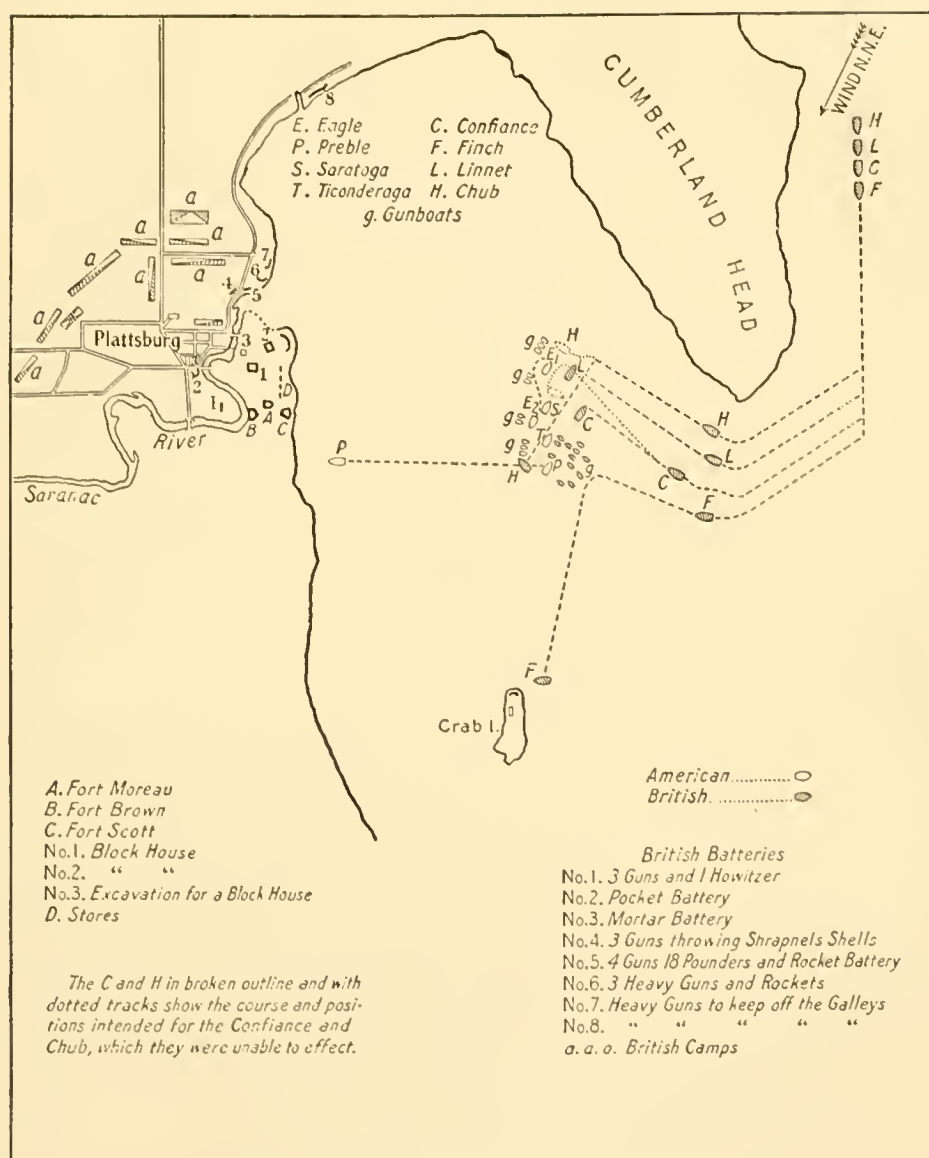


PLATE 2

DIAGRAM SHOWING THE BRITISH AND AMERICAN BATTERIES AT
PLATTSBURG AND THE POSITIONS ASSUMED BY THE VESSELS
OF THE TWO SQUADRONS DURING THE ENGAGEMENT
OF SEPTEMBER 11, 1814

(By permission of Captain A. T. Mahan, U. S. N.)

the Plattsburg batteries, could, nevertheless, have been 1814
injured by long range shots and driven from the bay
had Prevost carried Macomb's position and opened fire
from the latter's works.

The American commander's power to choose where and how he should receive the British attack was, in itself, a very appreciable offset to the enemy's superiority. His position and arrangements secured him other very decided advantages. By anchoring so far within the bay, Downie would be compelled to take a position inside of Cumberland Head and within range of the American short guns. The light and uncertain wind under Cumberland Head, with the possible necessity of tacking, would make an approach to the head of the line both tedious and exposed. The weather end of the line was strengthened more than the rear because, if either were exclusively attacked, the rear could be succored from windward while the van could not be reinforced from leeward. Before engaging, the Eagle mastheaded her topsail yards with a view to relieving the rear should the weight of the attack fall on that end of the line.

The preparations for receiving the enemy were not left until the last moment. Macdonough was informed of the condition and movements of the British vessels and knew that Prevost's arrival at Plattsburg would be followed by Downie's advance. By the 8th, at least, all was ready, and from then to the 11th every man and boy in the American squadron was in daily expectation of seeing the British ensign come fluttering around the point of Cumberland Head.

CHAPTER XI

1814

Action of September 11 — Defeat of the British squadron — The losses on both sides — British wounded removed to Crab Island — Burial of American and British officers with honors of war — Letters of English officers to Macdonough — His criticism of the *Eagle's* action in leaving her station during the engagement — Rewards to the victors — Charges against Prevost — Macdonough's toast.

1814 COMMODORE DOWNIE weighed anchor at daylight on the 11th and stood up the lake with a moderate wind from the northeast. So far Macdonough's calculations had proved correct. "When the enemy hove in sight at the distance of six miles I made the signal 'Impressed seamen call on every man to do his duty.' "* At 8 o'clock† the lookout boat lying off the entrance to the bay reported the British vessels well up toward Gravelly Point. The first sail to clear Cumberland Head was a store sloop attached to the squadron. Then, one by one, came the fighting ships; first the *Finch* and then the *Confiance*, followed by the *Linnet* and the *Chub*. As soon as the rearmost of these four vessels had cleared the Head they hove to. The slower moving gunboats then passed down the line and formed to leeward. Downie had already been advised by Sir

* Macdonough to C. A. Rodney.

† Captain Pring's official report and Midshipman Lea's letter (see appendix, E and H, respectively) disagree both with Macdonough's report and with each other as to the time the British squadron appeared off Plattsburg Bay and the time the engagement began. A number of independent original authorities, however, among them General Macomb, agree with the statement of the American commander on each of these points and I see no good reason for not accepting the latter's figures as correct.

George Prevost of the disposition of the American vessels and he had formed his plan of attack. "The *Confiance* should engage the *Saratoga*; but before doing so, would pass along the *Eagle*, from north to south, give her a broadside, and then anchor head and stern across the bows of the *Saratoga*. After this, the *Linnet* supported by the *Chub*, would become the opponent of the *Eagle*, reduced more nearly to equality by the punishment already received. Three British vessels would thus grapple the two strongest enemies. The *Finch* was to attack the American rear, supported by all the British gunboats." * His final instructions having been communicated to the commanding officers, Downie gave the signal a few minutes before 9 for the squadron to advance. The British vessels filled away and stood into the bay. The *Chub* pointed well to windward of the head of the American line; the *Linnet* laid her course toward the *Eagle's* bow; the *Confiance* headed in a direction to enable her to execute her intended manoeuvre; while the *Finch* and gunboats made directly for the *Ticonderoga* and *Preble*.

There was now a hushed, expectant moment like the stillness which precedes the storm. Macdonough, whose manly courage was supported by a childlike faith, knelt on the deck of the flagship with his officers around him and repeated the prayer appointed by the Church to be said before a fight at sea.

The enemy's vessels advanced slowly and steadily. While they were still some distance away, the impatient Henley let go his broadside of long 18's at the *Confiance*, which was considerably in the lead, but she was out of

* Captain A. T. Mahan's "Sea Power in Its Relations to the War of 1812", II, 377.

1814 reach. The effect of the Eagle's fire was watched from the Saratoga, and as soon as the British flagship appeared to be within range Macdonough personally sighted and fired one of his long 24's. The shot entered near the hawse-hole and ranged the length of the deck, killing and wounding several men. "Just as the first gun was fired from my ship I made the signal 'Close action.' "* All the American vessels now opened fire. The *Confiance* did not reply to the Saratoga's shot but stood on with the intention of gaining her position. She was now well under the lee of Cumberland Head where the wind was light and uncertain, as Macdonough had foreseen it would be. Downie evidently underestimated the power of annoyance possessed by his antagonist and overestimated his own power of endurance. His port bower anchor and also a spare anchor in the port fore-chains were presently shot away and our fire began to tell upon him severely. Finding it impossible to stand on any longer, he was compelled to come to and let go his starboard bower while still 350 † yards from the American line. The *Linnet* and *Chub*, which had been left some distance astern by the *Confiance*, now came up, and as the former passed the Saratoga to take her station she fired her broadside of long 12's at the flagship but without inflicting any injury. One of the balls broke a coop containing a gamecock which some of the sailors had brought on board. Unterrified by the din of battle and evidently feeling that he was now in his proper place, the cock flew into the rigging, flapped his wings, and

* Macdonough to C. A. Rodney. No other signal was made during the battle.

† I have taken the mean between the distances given by Pring and Macdonough.

crowed loudly and defiantly. The men considered 1814 this an omen of success and answered him with cheers. The Linnet took a position a little forward of the Eagle's beam and nearer the American line than was the Confiance. Meanwhile the Finch and the 12 gunboats worked into positions favorable for attacking the Ticonderoga and Preble.

The battle now resolved itself into two distinct parts. One consisted of the Eagle, Saratoga and 7 gunboats against the Confiance, Linnet and Chub; and the other consisted of the Ticonderoga, Preble and 3 gunboats against the Finch and 4 gunboats, the others not venturing to close.

Downie brought his ship to anchor in beautiful style and did not fire a gun until everything had been secured. Then he poured a broadside into the American flagship. The effect of his double-shotted long 24's, carefully aimed in smooth water at point blank range, was terrible. The Saratoga shivered from keel to truck and fairly reeled from the blow. When the shock subsided nearly half her crew were found stretched on deck, for many were thrown down who were not seriously hurt. The effect was but momentary. The dead and wounded were quickly passed below and the survivors took up the fight with undiminished courage. Among those killed by this discharge was the Saratoga's 2nd lieutenant, Peter Gamble. He was kneeling down in the act of sighting a bow gun when a shot entered the port, split the quoin and drove part of it against his breast, killing him without breaking the skin. Very soon after this the gallant Downie fell. He was standing behind one of his guns when a shot

1814 from the Saratoga struck it, throwing it off its carriage and against him, killing him instantly.*

The battle had now become general and active. The Chub, which, with the Linnet, was engaging the Eagle and a division of gunboats, soon had her spars, sails and rigging so damaged that she drifted helplessly down the American line. As she neared the Saratoga the latter gave her a single shot and she lowered her colors. Midshipman Platt, of the flagship, took possession of her and anchored her inshore. The Finch kept edging down upon the starboard quarter of the Preble with the apparent intention of taking a raking position under her stern, to prevent which Lieutenant Budd let go his spring (which had become too short owing to a shift of the wind to the eastward), got a couple of sweeps out of the stern ports, and by their use kept his broadside to bear. Four gunboats now came down on the Preble's weather bow intending to board her, whereupon Budd cut his cable, wore around toward the Finch and ran inshore, letting go his port broadside at the gunboats as he went about. About an hour after the engagement began the Finch, crippled by the guns of the Ticonderoga and Preble, drifted upon the rocks off Crab Island. Some of the invalids from the hospital manned the 6-pounder and gave her a shot or two, when she struck.

Having disposed of the Preble, four of the gunboats (the others kept at a distance) now attacked the Ticonderoga. Again and again they swept up to within

* The Honorable J. C. Hubbell, of Chazy, went on board the *Confiance* shortly after the close of the action and saw Captain Downie. He describes him as a fine looking, portly Englishman, and as he lay in his berth with his breast bared no wound was visible, only a broad black streak across his chest.

almost grappling distance of her, and were as often **1814** repulsed. Lieutenant Cassin coolly walked the schooner's after deck amid a storm of missiles, watching their movements and directing his guns to be loaded with canister and bags of musket balls when they attempted to close. Among the schooner's officers was Midshipman Hiram Paulding, who had been put in command of a division of 8 guns. When the gunboats approached it was discovered that owing to the haste with which the squadron had been fitted out the matches for firing the pieces were useless, but the resourceful young officer discharged the guns by flashing his pistol at them and kept this up through the whole fight. To carry the Ticonderoga by a fire poured into her stern or by boarding her over the taffrail were both perseveringly attempted and as gallantly and successfully resisted.

But while Cassin was sustaining his end of the line, things were not going so well at the other end. The Linnet, disregarding the American gunboats entirely, directed her whole fire against the Eagle, and the latter was also exposed to part of the fire of the Confiance. At 10.30 Henley cut his cable, sheeted home his topsails, ran down and anchored by the stern between and a little inshore of the Saratoga and Ticonderoga, from which position he opened on the Confiance with his port guns without being exposed to the fire of the frigate or the brig. But this movement exposed the Saratoga to the whole fire of the Linnet, for that vessel, after first driving off the gunboats which had been annoying her, sprang her broadside so as to rake her opponent.

1814 The American flagship was now in a critical situation. With a broadside of only 13 guns she was under a focal fire from two vessels which had begun the action with a total of 27 guns in the broadside. She was without the services of her 1st lieutenant, who was ill on shore, and her 2nd lieutenant had been killed early in the fight. Macdonough himself had been working like a common sailor at the guns. While sighting a favorite piece a shot cut the spanker boom in two, and a portion of the heavy spar fell upon him and knocked him senseless to the deck, and it was some minutes before he recovered consciousness. A little later a shot took off the head of the captain of the gun and drove it against him with such force that he was knocked across the deck and fell, almost senseless, between two guns. Twice the ship had been set on fire by hot shot from the *Confiance*.* One by one the *Saratoga*'s starboard guns had become disabled either by shot or by over charging. At last, on firing the only carronade left in the starboard battery, the navel bolt broke and the gun flew off the carriage and fell down the main hatch, leaving not a single available piece on that side. But Macdonough's foresight had provided the means for snatching victory from defeat. Letting go the stern anchor and cutting the bow cable, he winded the ship with the aid of the kedges and brought his port broadside to bear on the British flagship. The *Confiance* attempted to follow the example of the *Saratoga* and wind ship, but without success. Failing in her efforts to get around and with only four guns

* Macdonough added this statement with his own hand to the original draft of his report to the Secretary of the Navy.

to reply to the fresh broadside of her antagonist, she **1814**
was forced to strike about 11 o'clock.

By hauling on the starboard kedge hawser the Saratoga's broadside was then brought to bear on the Linnet. Captain Pring had handled the brig splendidly and had made a gallant fight, but his only hope now lay in escape. The disabled state of the Linnet's masts, sails, rigging and yards precluded the possibility of getting away by cutting her cable, but he kept up a spirited fight against a greatly superior foe in the hope that some of the gunboats would come and tow him off. It soon became evident, however, that no help could be expected from that quarter as the gunboats had been driven half a mile or so to the east, and after keeping up the unequal contest for 15 minutes, the plucky little brig hauled down her colors at 11.20. The British gunboats, observing that the larger vessels had struck, got under way with their sweeps and made their escape. The Saratoga signalled our gunboats to follow them but annulled the signal almost immediately and ordered their crews to assist in saving the *Confiance* and *Linnet* which were in a sinking condition. It has been stated that as the officer who took possession of the *Confiance* when the *Linnet* struck passed along the deck of the prize he accidentally fired one of the starboard guns by fouling the lock-string, whereupon the enemy's gunboats, which were lying about half a mile off apparently waiting to be taken possession of, pulled slowly away as if the discharge were a preconcerted signal. I think it was not. Sir E. P. Taché, writing in 1859 of the services of the detachment of the 3d battalion of Canadian militia,

1814 says: " Our compatriots, in three of these boats, took the position assigned them and kept their station firmly as long as they saw the English flag floating on board the last vessel of our squadron; but our colors being at last hauled down everywhere, and all then appearing to be hopelessly lost, they were able, under sweeps, to escape from an all powerful enemy and regain Isle aux Noix. I have these facts from my friends Captain Daly himself and his brave lieutenant, Hercules Olivier. * * * As to the English gunboats, some of them fought bravely side by side with our countrymen, but the greater number, under command of naval Lieutenant Rayot*, took flight at the beginning of the battle, which, no doubt, had a demoralizing effect on the spirits of the crews of our squadron."

The action lasted two hours and twenty minutes. At its close Captain Pring of the Linnet, Lieutenant McGhie of the Chub, and Lieutenant Hicks, of the Finch, joined Lieutenant Robertson on the Confiance and the four officers proceeded to the Saratoga to make a formal surrender of their swords. " They were very fine appearing fellows and their reception by Macdonough — considering the time, place, circumstances, manner and sentiments expressed — was one of the most beautiful exhibitions of moral sublimity ever witnessed. They came under convoy guard directly from the flagship Confiance, and as they stepped upon the deck of the Saratoga they met Commodore Macdonough, who kindly bowed to them, while they, holding their caps in their left hands and their swords, by the

* Lieutenant Rayot disappeared while under arrest, preparatory to his trial by a naval court martial, and he was dropped from the navy list.

B.S.

W. L. Ship's Purveyor
Plattsburgh September 11th 1814

Sir. The Council has been pleased to
grant us a signal victory on Lake
Champlain in the capture of an English
man of War and the sloops of war of the
enemy -

I have the honor to be
very respectfully

Yours Obedient

James W. Macdonough

Hon. Mr. Jones
Secretary of the Navy

PHOTOGRAPH OF MACDONOUGH'S DESPATCH TO THE SECRETARY OF THE
NAVY ANNOUNCING THE VICTORY OVER THE BRITISH SQUADRON
ON LAKE CHAMPLAIN, SEPTEMBER 11, 1814

blades, in their right, advanced toward him and, bow- 1814
ing, presented the weapons. The Commodore bowed
and said 'Gentlemen, return your swords into your
scabbards and wear them. You are worthy of them.'
And having obeyed the order, arm in arm, with their
swords by their sides, they walked the deck of their
conqueror." *

Within half an hour after the Linnet struck, a gig
from the Saratoga was sent ashore with this despatch
to the Secretary of the Navy:

MACDONOUGH TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY

U. S. SHIP SARATOGA, OFF PLATTSBURG,
September 11th, 1814.

Sir; The Almighty has been pleased to grant us a signal
victory on Lake Champlain in the capture of one frigate, one
brig and two sloops of war of the enemy.

I have the honor to be, very respectfully, sir, your obt servt,
T. MACDONOUGH, Com'g

HONBLE W. JONES,
Secretary of the Navy.

Lieutenant Vallette was directed to remove the pris-
oners to Crab Island as quickly as possible, to "treat
them kindly", and to "speak to them encouragingly."
The Saratoga had 28 killed and 29 wounded; the Eagle,
13 killed and 20 wounded; the Ticonderoga, 6 killed
and 6 wounded; the Preble, 2 killed; the gunboats
Borer, 3 killed and 1 wounded; Centipede, 1 wounded;
Wilmer, 1 wounded: total, 52 killed and 58 wounded.
Among the killed were Lieutenant Peter Gamble, of
the Saratoga, and Lieutenant John Stansbury, of the

* Rev. H. P. Bogue, an eye-witness, to Henry B. Dawson. Compare James'
"Naval Occurrences", p. 411.

1814 Ticonderoga. No American official report was made of the casualties on the British vessels. In Captain Pring's report to Sir James Yeo, written the day after the battle and admittedly incomplete, their losses were said to be — *Confiance*, 41 killed and 40 wounded; *Linnet*, 10 killed and 14 wounded; *Chub*, 6 killed and 16 wounded; *Finch*, 2 wounded: total, 57 killed and 72 wounded. The number given out unofficially by Macdonough is probably very nearly correct — *Confiance*, 50 killed and 60 wounded; *Linnet*, 20 killed and 30 wounded; the two sloops, 14 killed and 20 wounded: total, 84 killed and 110 wounded (see appendix, D). The English officers killed were Captain Downie, Lieutenant William Gunn, Lieutenant William Paul, and Captain Alexander Anderson, of the marines. The 47 wounded men paroled, mentioned in the American report, were those who had suffered seriously and who were sent to the British hospital at Isle aux Noix, the slightly wounded being included in the 367 prisoners. No mention is anywhere made of the losses the British gunboats must have sustained. A general order issued by Adjutant General Baynes at Montreal December 1 directs the detachment of the 3d battalion, Canadian militia, serving in the gunboats, to rejoin the headquarters of the corps and refers to the loss of one sergeant and eight soldiers killed and one lieutenant and two soldiers wounded in action with the enemy. This would account for but a small portion of the casualties which must have followed the persistent attacks of the gunboats on the Ticonderoga.

All the vessels suffered severely. Not a mast in either squadron would bear to make sail on and the

lower rigging, being nearly all shot away, hung down 1814 as though just thrown over the caps. The Saratoga had 55 round shot in her hull. Most of the enemy's fire, at least from the Confiance, passed well over the Saratoga's deck, and at the close of the action there were not twenty whole hammocks in the nettings. The guns of the Confiance were levelled at point blank range, and as the quoins were loosened at each discharge and were not properly replaced, her guns became more and more elevated and their shot went over instead of into the Saratoga. Bad as was the condition of the latter, that of the Confiance was infinitely worse. Her spring and rudder had been shot away and her " masts, yards and sails so shattered that one looked like so many bunches of matches and the other like a bundle of old rags * * * and her hull like a riddle." * She had received over 105 round shot in her hull, many of them between wind and water, and was almost foundering when she struck. The outside of her was literally covered with small shot which failed to penetrate her stout oak planking. Her decks, strewn with the dying and the dead, were

" Red, from mainmast to bitts,
 Red, on bulwark and wale,
 Red, by combing and hatch,
 Red, o'er netting and vail."

The Linnet, too, had been so often hulled that the water was nearly a foot above her lower deck at the end of the fight. As the Confiance and Linnet were in a

* Midshipman Lea, of the Confiance, to his brother (see appendix, H).

1814 sinking condition, men were sent at once to their pumps and the gunboats towed them into shallow water.

One of the eye-witnesses of the engagement was Senator Phelps, of Vermont, who was then a boy living on his father's farm near the shore of the lake. He used to relate how, after the British had surrendered, he took a boat and pulled out to the Saratoga. When he climbed up on deck he found it slippery with blood and almost covered with the wounded and the dead. He saw a man walking quickly back and forth on the quarterdeck, his cap pulled down over his eyes and his face and hands almost black with powder and smoke. Upon asking who the man was a sailor replied, "that's Commodore Macdonough."

Sad and painful duties, legacies of the day's hard fought battle, were yet to be performed. As soon as practicable the wounded of both sides were taken to the hospital on Crab Island where they received every care and attention it was possible to bestow upon them. The more seriously wounded of the enemy were paroled on the 13th and sent to the English hospital at Isle aux Noix. "I have much satisfaction", wrote Captain Pring to Sir James Yeo, "in making you acquainted with the humane treatment the wounded have received from Commodore Macdonough. They were immediately removed to his own hospital on Crab Island and were furnished with every requisite. His generous and polite attention also to myself, officers and men will ever hereafter be gratefully remembered."

The English and American dead were buried side by side just south of the hospital tents, which were at the north end of the island, and there they lie to-day in

unmarked graves. On the 14th the burial of the officers of the two squadrons took place with all the honors of war. The bodies of the American officers, covered with the flags of their vessels, were placed in one of the *Saratoga's* boats which then proceeded to the *Confiance*, followed by the American commander and his surviving officers, while minute guns were fired from the flagship. The bodies of the British officers, covered with the flags of their own vessels, having been received, the procession, including the surviving English officers, proceeded to the shore. There the funeral party was met by a large escort of infantry, artillery, officers of the army, and citizens. While on the way to the cemetery, minute guns were fired from the fort. Tenderly the battle scarred bodies were lowered into the ground, and with a farewell volley over their graves the brave souls were left to sleep in peace until the awakening on that day when there shall be neither wars nor rumors of wars. Later in the day Macdonough, with his own hand, wrote Major William Gamble of the death of his son and that he had been buried with military honors. A few days afterward he sent a similar personally written letter to General T. E. Stansbury informing him of the death of his son Lieutenant John Stansbury. 1814

All the prisoners who were able to bear the journey and had not been paroled left Plattsburg on the steamboat the 15th in charge of Captain White Youngs for Greenbush, N. Y., where they arrived the 22nd. Before their departure the following letters were written by the officers of the *Linnet* and by Lieutenant Robertson, who succeeded to the command of the *Confiance* when Commodore Downie fell:

1814 THE OFFICERS OF THE LINNET TO MACDONOUGH

STEAMBOAT, Sept. 15, 1814.

Sir; The officers of His British Majesty's Sloop Linnet cannot leave Plattsburg without expressing their gratitude for the honorable treatment they have received from Commodore Macdonough and the officers of the United States Ship Saratoga, and hope, should any opportunity offer, to show the same attention to any American officers the chance of war may throw in their power.

We are, sir, with the utmost respect,

THE OFFICERS OF THE LINNET.

To COMMODORE MACDONOUGH,

United States Ship Saratoga,
off Plattsburg.

LIEUTENANT ROBERTSON TO MACDONOUGH

U. S. SHIP SARATOGA, OFF PLATTSBURG,
15th Sept., 1814.

Sir; I am requested by the surviving officers of H. M. late Ship Confiance to express to you how sensibly they feel indebted to your unbounded liberality and humane attention not only extended to themselves but to the unfortunate wounded seamen and marines, whose sufferings have been alleviated to the utmost that circumstances would permit.

Accept, sir, this testimony of our gratitude and esteem, and believe that we will ever have the feelings of British officers on the occasion.

We further beg leave to request that you will be pleased to intimate to Lt. Cassin and the other officers under your command that we feel as we accept their kind anticipation of all our wishes, and that should the chance of war ever give us an opportunity of making a return, how proud we should be of bearing personal testimony to their marked kindness and politeness.

I have the honor to be, sir, with esteem and gratitude, your most obedient, humble servant,

JAMES ROBERTSON,
late 1st Lt. H. M. S. Confiance.

In this action the American gunboats apparently 1814 behaved somewhat unequally, for in the hottest part of the fight orders had to be sent to some of them to obey the signal for close action. They had, as was usually the case, no influence on the result. Of the action of the Preble's commander in quitting his station and saving his vessel by taking her inshore the Commodore said: "Lt. Budd acted with propriety in getting under way with the Preble. He would otherwise have been boarded by the enemy's galleys." Lieutenant Cassin fought the Ticonderoga nobly, and had he not kept the enemy's gunboats from getting at the Saratoga the result of the battle might have been reversed.

The Eagle was well fought but there is some question as to whether her commander was justified in shifting his position. Macdonough was most decidedly of the opinion that he ought not to have done so — that the Eagle did not suffer severely enough to warrant Henley in giving way and exposing the Saratoga to the Linnet's fire. To quote the Commodore's own words: "Her list of killed and wounded would show what necessity she was under to change her station, and even that evidence of her disability was made up of the names of wounded men, in part, who had only been so scratched or slightly hurt as not to merit the name of wounded."

It is a fact that Henley reported 27 wounded, "most of them severely" he wrote the Secretary of the Navy; that this number was reduced to 20 in Macdonough's report; that only 11 of these 20 were hospital cases; and that Surgeon Briggs, under instructions from Macdonough, examined the remaining 9 men, who were

1814 not removed from the Eagle, and found that with one exception (Andrew McEwen) their injuries were so slight as hardly to merit the name of wounds.* Including McEwen in the hospital cases, we have 12 men who may fairly be classed as wounded, practically the same proportion to the killed as reported by the other vessels. Macdonough's criticism justifies the conclusion that the Eagle's condition was not nearly as bad as represented by her commander in his extraordinary report to the Secretary of the Navy (see appendix, C). Commenting on this report Macdonough wrote: "I am really very much surprised at the conduct of Lt. Henley. His statement is unquestionably very erroneous and will, I fear, ultimately be injurious to himself. He is assuredly wanting in magnanimity in detracting from the merits of his brother officers by giving his vessel a greater share than she is entitled to. I consider Lt. Henley personally a brave man and he had brave officers and men with him, yet he did not fight the whole of the battle and previous to his leaving the lake he expressed himself satisfied with what I said of his vessel in my letter to the Department and it is in substance and nearly in the words of his report to me of the services of his vessel."†

In his report the American commander gave Henley's reason for leaving his position in the line, namely,

* "Actg Lt. William A. Spencer, slight wound of the cheek; Francis T. Breese, slight wound of the hand; Joseph Valentine, slight wound muscular part leg; Andrew McEwen, right leg fractured; Matthew Scriver, slight wound right shoulder; John McKenny, slightly wounded, hardly perceptible; Robert Buckley, slight wound in the breast; John Hartley, slightly wounded right leg and arm; James Dervick, slight wound of the cheek."— Surgeon Briggs' report to Macdonough.

† Macdonough (U. S. Brig Eagle, off Plattsburg) to the Hon. Elisha Winter, M. C., October 9. 1814.



THE OBERSE AND REVERSE OF THE GOLD MEDAL PRESENTED
BY CONGRESS TO COMMODORE MACDONOUGH

because he could not bring his guns to bear. As the 1814 Commodore was clearly of the opinion that the condition of the *Eagle's* crew did not justify her change of station, it must be inferred, as a corollary, that he also thought Henley could have found means to bring his guns to bear had he kept the position assigned him.

The rewards bestowed upon the victor by his grateful and admiring countrymen were numerous and substantial. He was promoted November 18 from master commandant to captain, to rank from September 11, 1814. Congress adopted a resolution thanking him for his services and presented him with a gold medal commemorative of the event (see appendix, L). From Vermont, which witnessed so large a portion of his labors, he received one hundred acres of land on Cumberland Head overlooking the scene of the engagement; from New York, which he so signally served, a sword and one thousand acres of land in Cayuga county; from Connecticut, his adopted state, a pair of gold mounted pistols; and from Delaware, his native state, a sword and a service of silver. The city of *Lansingburgh* gave him a silver pitcher and goblets; *Albany*, the freedom of the city in a gold box and a lot on Washington Square; and New York, the freedom of the city in a gold box. Delaware and the city of New York also requested him to sit for his portrait.* The New York State Society of the *Cincinnati* elected him an honorary member, and the invitations to public dinners were almost without number. The Secretary of the Navy made the following reply to the despatch announcing the victory:

* The portrait in the City Hall, New York, was painted by Jarvis in November, 1817.

1814

NAVY DEPARTMENT, Sept. 19th, 1814.

THOMAS MACDONOUGH, ESQ.,

COMMANDING THE U. S. NAVAL FORCE ON LAKE CHAM-
PLAIN, PLATTSBURG.

Sir; With the highest gratification which noble deeds can inspire, I acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 11th instant announcing the glorious victory which your skill and valor, aided by the intrepidity and discipline of your gallant associates, had achieved over a confident, vigorous and powerful foe. Our lakes, hitherto the objects only of natural curiosity, shall fill the page of future history with the bright annals of our country's fame and the imperishable renown of our naval heroes.

'Tis not alone the brilliancy of your victory in a naval view, but its importance and beneficial results that will fix the attention and command the gratitude of your admiring country.

Accept, sir, the assurance of the high respect and warm approbation of the President of the U. S. which I am commanded to present, and my sincere congratulations.

Very respectfully your obedient servant,

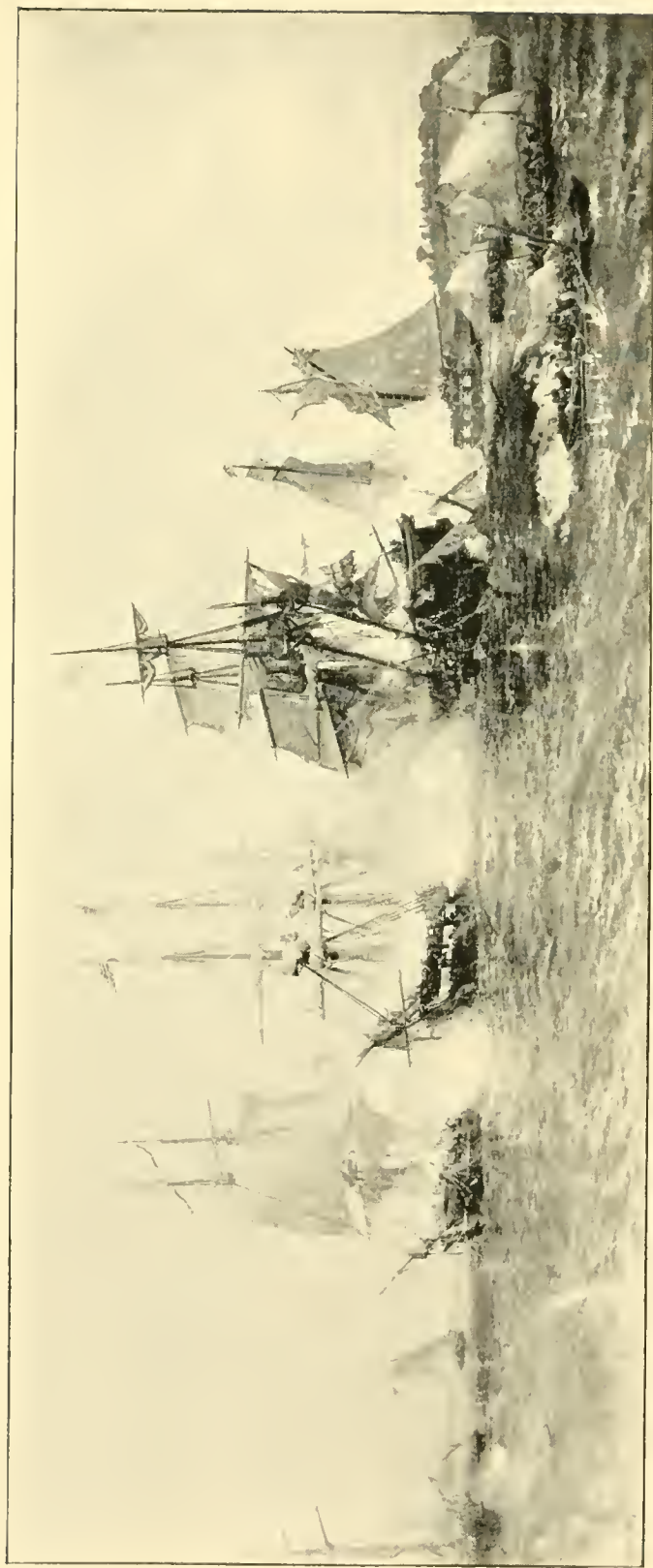
W. JONES.

Among the congratulatory letters he received was one from Captain Bainbridge, who wrote: "Receive, my gallant and much admired friend, my heartfelt congratulations on your noble victory. I was anxious for you to meet the enemy, the result of which I never feared. Thanks to that God who guards us in battle that you had escaped in the midst of unparalleled slaughter! Your victory on Champlain will be a bright ornament in our naval history, and your name, my friend, will descend to our children with admiration for the hero of that lake. When you have leisure, give me the pleasure of hearing from you. May you long live for your country's sake is the prayer of your sincere friend, Wm. Bainbridge."

His gallant associates whose efforts contributed so largely to the result were not overlooked in the distribution of honors. "The officers, petty officers, seamen, marines, and infantry serving as marines" shared in the vote of thanks passed by Congress; gold medals were presented to Master Commandant Robert Henley and Lieutenant Stephen Cassin, silver medals to the other commissioned officers of the navy and army serving in the squadron and to the nearest male relatives of Lieutenant Peter Gamble and Lieutenant John Stansbury, and a sword to each of the midshipmen and sailing masters; and three months' extra pay was allowed the petty officers, seamen, marines, and infantry serving as marines (see appendix, L). Master Commandant Henley was made a captain in 1825. Lieutenant Cassin, who had served with Macdonough under Preble in the Mediterranean, was commissioned master commandant to rank from September 11, 1814, and died a captain; Lieutenant Budd died before being promoted; Lieutenant Smith, Acting Lieutenant Vallette, Midshipman Breese and Midshipman Paulding all reached the grade of rear admiral, and Midshipman Graham that of commodore; Acting Lieutenant Spencer resigned while a captain, and Midshipman Platt died a master commandant.

Of the battle Cooper writes: "The country generally placed the victory by the side of that of Lake Erie. In the navy, which is better qualified to enter into just estimates of force and all the other circumstances that enhance the merits of nautical exploits, the battle of Plattsburg Bay is justly ranked among the very highest of its claims to glory." Roosevelt says: "Mac-

1814 donough in this battle won a higher fame than any other commander of the war, British or American. He had a decidedly superior force to contend against, the officers and men of the two sides being about on a par in every respect; and it was solely owing to his foresight and resource that we won the victory. He forced the British to engage at a disadvantage by his excellent choice of position; and he prepared beforehand for every possible contingency. His personal prowess had already been shown at the cost of the rovers of Tripoli, and in this action he helped fight the guns as ably as the best sailor. His skill, seamanship, quick eye, readiness of resource, and indomitable pluck, are beyond all praise." Commander Ward, U. S. N., in his "Manual of Naval Tactics", cites the action as an "example of foresight and accurate reasoning in preparation for the battle, as well as of undaunted perseverance, gallantry, and skill in conducting it to a successful issue", and adds: "Whilst the preparations and conduct of the defense, as far as depending on the American commander, were unexceptionable, wholly beyond criticism, the attack seems likewise to have been in the main faultless, both in its conception and execution. True, the English advanced head on to their enemy, and in doing so suffered severely, perhaps fatally. But that was made inevitable by the American defense and the natural circumstances of the case, and as was intended, went far towards compensating for disparity of force. * * * The careful student will find in history no general action fought at anchor more instructive, therefore more worthy of his attentive notice, close study indeed, than this, viewed in



THE BATTLE OF LAKE CHAMPLAIN, SEPTEMBER 11, 1814
(From Davidson's painting)

whatever aspect — whether in reference to the attack 1814
 or the defense, the personal or the material, skill or
 science, gunnery or seamanship, or as furnishing ex-
 amples, in most of these respects, of warning as well as
 for imitation.” Captain A. T. Mahan, U. S. N., in the
 work which has already been referred to, is of the opin-
 ion that “ the battle of Lake Champlain, more nearly
 than any other incident of the War of 1812, merits the
 word ‘ decisive ’ ” — decisive not merely in relation to
 immediate military results but in relation to political
 questions involved in the pending negotiations for peace.

When Sir James Lucas Yeo forwarded to London
 September 24 Captain Pring’s report of the 12th, he
 intimated that Sir George Prevost was responsible for
 the loss of the British squadron because he hurried
 Downie into action before the latter was ready, and be-
 cause he failed to take the American works at Platts-
 burg and drive the American vessels out of the bay,
 thereby compelling Downie to enter the bay and en-
 gage at a disadvantage (see appendix, E). The verdict
 of the court martial held on Captain Pring and the
 other commanding officers (see appendix, F) contained
 such strictures on Prevost’s conduct that he insisted
 that Yeo should be required to present his charges for-
 mally to give an opportunity for a formal reply. The
 charges, four in number (see appendix, G), were issued
 from the Horse Guards September 13, 1815, and a gen-
 eral court martial ordered for January 12, 1816, but
 Prevost died a week before that date.

On the 23rd of September a dinner was given by the
 citizens of Plattsburg in Macdonough’s honor which
 was attended by his officers, General Macomb, and the

1814 officers of the army. The toasts were numerous and naturally complimentary to the army, navy and militia and their representatives. When Macdonough was called upon he arose and with chivalrous courtesy to a fallen foe proposed the toast — “ The memory of Commodore Downie, our brave enemy.”

CHAPTER XII

1814-1815

Prevost's retreat — Most of the American squadron sent to Whitehall — Macdonough obtains permission to leave the lake — Turns over command of the squadron to Lieutenant Budd — Macdonough's work on Lake Champlain — Farewell letter from officers of the squadron — His reply — Letters to De Witt Clinton, Governor Tompkins and Governor Chittenden — Presented with the freedom of the city of Albany — Arrives at Middletown — Naval ball in his honor — Ordered to the steam frigate *Fulton* First at New York — Made a freeman of the city of New York.

WHEN the naval action began Prevost's assaulting 1814 columns were put in motion and his batteries opened on the American works. Just as a small portion of his force effected a crossing at the upper ford the result of the battle in the bay became known on both sides. Downie's defeat was a serious matter for Prevost. "This unlooked for event", he wrote to Earl Bathurst, "depriving me of the co-operation of the fleet, without which the further prosecution of the service was become impracticable, I did not hesitate to arrest the course of the troops advancing to the attack because the most complete success would have been unavailing, and the possession of the enemy's works offered no advantage to compensate for the loss we must have sustained in acquiring possession of them." He drew in his assaulting columns at once, but kept his batteries playing upon Macomb's works until nightfall. At three o'clock in the afternoon he sent a note to Macdonough asking to be informed of the loss sustained by the British vessels. During the night of the 11th and

1814 the early morning of the 12th he withdrew his entire force, leaving behind his sick and wounded, consigned to General Macomb's humanity, and an immense quantity of stores of all kinds.

While the immediate result of the naval victory was the frustration of Prevost's plan to invade New York, it also had, coupled with Perry's success on Lake Erie, an important bearing upon the negotiations for peace. During the rest of the season the squadron made its headquarters in Plattsburg Bay, where the necessary repairs were made to its own and the captured British vessels. A close watch was kept upon the mouth of the Richelieu River, but none of the gunboats which fled to Isle aux Noix ventured across the line. By the end of September the *Confiance* was repaired and painted and ready for service under a new flag. There being no longer any necessity for retaining the whole force on active duty, the vessels were gradually sent to the head of the lake where it was intended to lay them up for the winter. On October 2 the *Saratoga*, *Confiance*, *Linnet* and *Ticonderoga* left Plattsburg for Whitehall, and as they passed Burlington the flagship saluted the town, the last gun, probably, she ever fired. Macdonough now took command of the *Eagle* and kept her for five weeks. Under instructions from the Navy Department between 250 and 300 men were detached from the Lake Champlain station and sent to Sackett's Harbor.

In the latter part of October Macdonough went to Whitehall to make arrangements for laying the squadron up. The temporary naval hospital on Crab Island, rudely constructed of boards and canvas, offered

no protection against the increasing cold of the early northern Autumn, and he had already removed the sick and wounded to comfortable quarters at Burlington under charge of Surgeon William Caton, Jr. Early in November the *Eagle* and one or two other vessels went down to Chazy and recovered almost six tons of 8-inch shells which the enemy had thrown into the lake. A British transport sloop which had gone down off Isle la Motte was also raised and was found to be loaded with a large quantity of stores and munitions of war. The *Eagle* returned to Plattsburg the 9th and found the following communication from the Navy Department:

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY TO MACDONOUGH

NAVY DEPARTMENT, October 30th, 1814.

Sir; Your desire to report yourself at this Department for the purpose of settling your accounts is assented to with great pleasure, as well on account of the propriety of the motive as the gratification it will afford to the government and your fellow citizens of this place to testify to you personally the high sense they entertain of your valuable services.

You will therefore leave the squadron in charge of the officer next in rank, until a senior shall be selected for the command, and give to him such orders as you shall deem necessary for the protection of the lake and the security of the squadron against any possible enterprise until the season shall arrive for placing them in winter quarters, for which also you will give the proper directions.

After you shall have closed your accounts with the squadron, you will instruct the officer in command not to enter into any new contracts or engagements, or to draw any bills on the agent at New York, but to make either directly or through the purser such requisitions on the agent as the service may require.

You will prepare and bring with you a particular statement

1814 of the dimensions, armament, equipment, stores &c. of the captured vessels, and a particular account of their state and condition, including an estimate of their fair equitable value with everything attached to them when captured, and the expenditure it may require to repair and fit them for service. It will also be proper to proceed against them by libel in the district court of the U. States for New York.

I am very respectfully, &c.,

W. JONES.

The next day Macdonough turned over the command of the squadron to Lieutenant Charles A. Budd with these explicit instructions:

MACDONOUGH TO LIEUTENANT BUDD

U. S. BRIG EAGLE, PLATTSBURG BAY,
Nov. 10th, 1814.

Sir; Agreeably to an order from the Hon. Secretary of the Navy to me dated 30th October, 1814, you will take command of the U. S. squadron on Lake Champlain. You will be particularly careful to guard against any enterprise of the enemy at all times (but more especially should there be a necessity for your going to the northward of this place), vigilant in watching the movements of the enemy on the lake that he does not capture or injure in any manner the public property, the citizens, or their property, to prevent which your force is amply sufficient. Do not be induced by any show of the enemy to get you beyond Point au Fer, or any wish or request of the commanding officer of our land forces. The navigation of that water and your full knowledge of it will, I trust, be sufficient to prevent your going there unless there should be a land force of ours superior to that of the enemy acting in concert with you.

The time will arrive in the course of a few days to lay the squadron up for the winter as the season is far advanced, the men suffering considerably from the severity of the weather, and the enemy at present evincing to my knowledge no intention to come out from his stronghold with his galleys, the only

naval force he at present possesses. You will, however, advise 1814
with the commanding general on the expediency of your going
before you go. It is absolutely necessary, however, that you
get to Whitehall before the ice makes, as you will there have
all the vessels together and farthest from the enemy's land
forces during the winter.

When at Whitehall the vessels must be moored so as to
bring the guns to bear on any point, the greatest number on
that point from whence an attack would most likely be made.
Correspond frequently with the commanding general, who
will inform you of the movements of the enemy and give you
information should his object be the destruction of the vessels,
of which you will immediately inform the Hon. Secretary of
the Navy and take measures to repel or defeat such an attempt.
It will be well, when you arrive, to raise two or three three-
gun batteries in advance of each other, all in advance of the
squadron, on some eligible point bearing on the lake in case
the enemy comes on the ice, and either entrench or strongly
barricade a small island called Craft's Island immediately
where the vessels will lie with a hundred or two of men to hold
it, with shelter for the men, and to have cannon on it. On
the first correct intelligence of such an attempt of the enemy,
viz., to destroy the vessels, you will require without loss of
time the aid of the surrounding militia and advise without fail
the government of it. Do not depend solely on the command-
ing general for information of the enemy's motions but be
vigilant in your own enquiries from every source from which
you would likely obtain it.

It is the order of the government that you enter into no
contracts for the squadron but make your requisitions on the
navy agent at New York directly or through the purser as the
service may require, and draw no bills on the navy agent at
New York.

It will require your personal attention as well as the con-
stant vigilance of all your officers to keep the vessels in order
as to their powder, sails, etc., having sentinels and a regular
watch kept to guard against any articles being taken away;
and I cannot impress too strongly on your mind the great

1814 necessity of guarding against incendiaries. To destroy these vessels is admitted to be the first and greatest wish of the enemy on this frontier, to effect which means will, I do not doubt, be taken to attempt to burn them by offering a large reward to probably some of our own citizens and most likely those who may, by their intimacy with the officers or men, be the least suspicious.

It will also require your vigilance personally to keep the men regular in their habits, to prevent fatal consequences by intoxication in this cold climate, and to prevent abuse or maltreating of the citizens in any manner. It will be well to adopt the method which was adopted last winter at Vergennes of making the aggressor pay for any injury done to a citizen and assessing such injury by theft among the men of the vessel by whom the theft was committed if the person cannot be found who committed it, or among the whole of the men should the particular vessel not be known.

The prevention of injury in any manner by the enemy on the lake, a hearty co-operation with the land forces, and guarding against any attempts or enterprises of the enemy will be the objects of your first and immediate attention until you lay up for the winter. Then the safety of the vessels in guarding against fire as before said of citizens and the regularity and good order of the vessels, officers and men will be the objects of your immediate care and attention.

Respectfully I am, sir, your obedient servant,

T. MACDONOUGH.

LT. COMMANDANT CHARLES A. BUDD.

On November 12 Macdonough advised the Secretary of the Navy that he had formally relinquished the command of the squadron to Lieutenant Budd but that he would remain on the lake until it went into winter quarters. On the 18th he went to Whitehall, where all the vessels except the Eagle and some of the gunboats had been assembled, and took up his quarters on the *Confiance*. Lieutenant Budd soon arrived with

the brig and remaining gunboats. None of these 1814
vessels, except the gunboat Allen, was ever put in
commission again. Peace was declared before their
services were required. After the war they were
dismantled and captors and captured sold to the
highest bidder.

Macdonough's work on Lake Champlain was now
completed. Although he was ordered there again the
following year, peace was declared before active opera-
tions were undertaken by either side. Except from
June 3 to September 8, 1813, and from the breaking up
of the ice to May 27, 1814, about seven weeks in all,
he had been master of the lake. For two years he
had labored unceasingly, persevering in the face of
every discouragement, undismayed by temporary re-
verses, overcoming every obstacle, patient, resolute,
resourceful. His labors were crowned with a victory
as brilliant as it was decisive. During these two years
the army on the Champlain frontier was commanded
successively by Generals Bloomfield, Hampton, Wil-
kinson, Izard and Macomb. The necessity of co-
operation between the land and naval forces brought
their commanders into close touch, and while Mac-
donough's official relations with the army officers were
such as the situation demanded they were supple-
mented, in the case of Macomb, by warm personal
friendship. They were both young men, vigorous and
ambitious. Each freely rendered the other the de-
sired assistance and support as friend to friend, and
they worked in perfect harmony with a common pur-
pose. It is worth noting that both our great lake
victories were won by young men. Perry was only

1814 twenty-eight when he fought the battle of Lake Erie and Macdonough was but thirty when he defeated the British squadron on Lake Champlain. When we reflect upon the circumstances under which our lake commanders created and fought their inland navies — the distance from the points of supply; the difficulty in transporting men, munitions of war and naval stores; the impossibility of securing enough seamen; the enforced employment of soldiers in place of sailors; the severity of the climate and the hardships peculiar to the lake service — the wonder is, not that they accomplished so much but that they accomplished anything.

While it is true that, with the exception of the events in the latter part of 1814, the operations on Lake Champlain were not as important nor of such magnitude as those on some of the other lakes, nevertheless it was the purpose of the government at all periods of the war to control its waters. The tenor of the Department's order to Macdonough of September 28, 1812, to proceed to Lake Champlain without a moment's delay; his instructions of June 17, 1813, not to permit the enemy to gain the ascendancy on any account; the explanation given on January 28, 1814, that the object of certain orders was to leave no doubt of his commanding the lake and the waters connected therewith; the order of February 22, 1814, directing him to shape his plans so as to meet the force and preparations of the enemy with decisive effect — all these are indications that the naval supremacy on Lake Champlain was considered of sufficient importance at all times to justify any measures necessary to secure

and retain it. This was the work Macdonough was 1814 given to do — and did.

The day after turning over the command of the squadron to Lieutenant Budd the Commodore received the following touching letter from his brother officers:

OFFICERS OF LAKE CHAMPLAIN SQUADRON TO
MACDONOUGH

U. S. FLOTILLA, LAKE CHAMPLAIN,
11th November, 1814.

THOMAS MACDONOUGH, ESQR.,

Sir; It is with the greatest sensibility we have learned our country has called you from a station where your indefatigable exertions have given to the American name one of the brightest lustres that encircle the infant navy of our country. There are none better able of judging your privations than those who have been eye-witnesses to your patient endurance of the many obstacles so incident to the creation of the means of defense in a country where mechanical assistance and naval supplies offered in their application a phenomenon to the surrounding citizens of Champlain.

Though the feelings of our hearts announce to us that your services require a respite from the arduous duties which have for nearly three years unremittingly engaged you, yet it is with the most poignant regret we view this separation. Whether as losing our commander, our preceptor, our example, or our friend, all, all leave a void which we doubt never can be filled. Your country, who must know your worth, will duly appreciate it. May its rewards be equal to those merits which we admire and reverence; may you in the endearment of your family and in the bosom of your fellow citizens enjoy those blessings which the God of mercy has assured to the truly good and virtuous is the most fervent wish of our hearts.

1814 With the highest regard we are, esteemed sir,
Your obedt servants

CHAS. A. BUDD	N. L. MONTGOMERY
M. MAURY	CHAS. T. PLATT
E. A. F. VALLETTE	FRANK ELLERY
GEO. BEALE, JR.	H. PAULDING
W. YOUNGS	JAMES M. BALDWIN
W. M. ROBINS	WM. BODEN
SAML KETELTAS	JOSHUA H. JUSTIN
J. LOOMIS	W. M. SLOCUM
D. V. HAZARD	JOSEPH L. CANNON
PHILIP BRUM	STEPHEN L. CLARK
JOSEPH LINDSAY	L. G. CRARY
T. P. BRIGGS	SAMUEL WINSLOW
WM. B. HOWELL	STEPHEN HOLLAND

THOMAS MACDONOUGH, ESQR.,
(Late) Commanding Naval Force, Lake Champlain.

To this letter he replied as follows:

MACDONOUGH TO OFFICERS OF LAKE CHAMPLAIN SQUADRON

U. S. BRIG EAGLE, PLATTSBURG, NOV. 15, 1814.

Gentlemen; I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 11th inst. Among the many evidences of approbation of my countrymen I assure you that a similar sentiment of the officers attached to the squadron which I had the honor to command is received with great pleasure and satisfaction. The harmony and unanimity which universally prevailed in the squadron formed one of its most efficient points; and permit me to return you my sincere thanks for your zeal and steady deportment in your several stations and through your individual exertions to congratulate you on the fortunate issue of our lake services.

Very respectfully your mo. obdt servt,

T. MACDONOUGH.

TO THE OFFICERS OF THE SQUADRON
ON LAKE CHAMPLAIN.

On Tuesday, September 27, Macdonough and General Macomb, with their officers, attended a public dinner given in the former's honor at Burlington. Macdonough's toast on this occasion was: "Commodore Chauncey. May his country soon be gratified with the first wish of his heart — a meeting with Sir James Yeo." On the 28th of September DeWitt Clinton, mayor of New York, forwarded the resolutions of the common council, to which the Commodore replied: "I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 28th ultimo conveying to me the resolutions of the honorable the corporation of the city of New York. To meet the approbation of my country has always been my greatest ambition, and this distinguished honor conferred on me by your honorable corporation is received with feelings of peculiar pride and gratification. Permit me to return you my warmest thanks for the friendly expressions contained in your letter."

To Governor Tompkins he wrote November 20: "I have the honor to acknowledge receipt of your Excellency's letters of the 4th and 5th inst. transmitting the resolutions of the honorable the legislature of the state of New York, also an extract from a law from the same state for the presentation to me of a grant of land in the town of Sterling, county of Cayuga. This act, of such distinguished honor to an individual for only performing his duty to his country and munificent in raising him to a state of independence, fully receives my most sincere thanks replete with feelings of lasting gratitude. In procuring the sword I beg your Excellency will consult your own convenience. Accept, I

1814 beg you, sir, my warmest acknowledgments for the flattering manner in which you have always been pleased to express yourself of my services."

On the same date he wrote to Governor Chittenden: "I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 12th inst. enclosing the resolutions of the honorable legislature of the state of Vermont. I cannot, sir, but feel that my humble services on this frontier have been greatly overrated. Permit me, however, to make my only return by expressing my gratitude for so munificent and honorary a mark of the approbation of a patriotic people, and I beg your Excellency to accept my sincere thanks for the very friendly sentiments accompanying the resolutions."

The Commodore left Whitehall early in December for his home in Middletown. He stopped at Troy, where he was the guest of honor at a dinner, and Monday morning the 5th went on to Albany. He was met at the "three mile house" by the common council and a number of citizens who escorted him to the capitol, where he was welcomed by a national salute. The mayor then presented him with the freedom of the city in a gold box and the deed to a city lot. The presentation was accompanied by an appropriate address, to which the Commodore replied: "The freedom of the city of Albany which you, in behalf of the honorable the corporation, have been pleased to confer on me, and the presentation of a deed of a lot of ground on the Washington Square, as testimonials of your approbation of my late services, are received with feelings of the highest gratification and pride. It is, sir, in a very great degree through the individual exertions and con-

duct of my brave companions in arms, under divine 1814 providence, that I, within the walls of the capitol of the most important state in the Union, thus receive these distinguished honors of my countrymen. I trust I shall be ever mindful of them and that my future life will be devoted to the faithful discharge of my duty to my country."

At four o'clock the same afternoon a dinner was given to the Commodore at Skinner's Tontine Coffee House, the Hon. Stephen Van Rensselaer presiding. Macdonough proposed the toast: "His Excellency the governor, the legislature of the state of New York, and the honorable the mayor and corporation of the city of Albany. Their magnanimity and munificence are characteristic of a rich and powerful state. Thrice happy the man whom they delight to honor." To which the president responded: "Commodore Macdonough, the hero of Lake Champlain. For us he fought, for us he conquered, and by his victory insured our safety." The following evening he attended a naval ball given in his honor at the Eagle tavern, at which Commodore Chauncey, General Winder and many other prominent persons were present. The ball "was very numerously attended", said an Albany paper, "and the display of beauty, elegance and taste never before excelled in this city." A display of fireworks ended the festivities.

From Albany the Commodore proceeded to Middletown, where he arrived Saturday the 10th, happy to be again with his family and friends if only for a brief period. "Every countenance beams with joy at the return of the hero and every heart bids him welcome."

1814 In honor of his home coming a naval ball was given at the Washington Hotel Wednesday, December 21. "For numbers and respectability", the Middletown Spectator said of the ball, "it has never been equalled in this place. There was an uncommonly numerous assemblage from this and other towns, consisting of about one hundred and eighty ladies and gentlemen. The judges of the supreme court, in session here, were present as guests, and the general attendance of the Fair offered a brilliant display of beauty, elegance and taste. In addition to the music customary on these occasions, a band of military music from Chatham politely volunteered their gratuitous services and by their excellent performance added much to the pleasure of the scene. The large dancing hall of the hotel was decorated with the different American naval flags, some of which were suspended from the walls and others were tastefully arranged as curtains to the windows, bordered with evergreens and hung in flowing festoons. Wreaths and crowns of laurel &c. were handsomely disposed as ornaments in different parts of the room, and the entrance door was surmounted by a triumphal arch of evergreens and laurel. Two handsome transparent paintings at opposite sides of the apartment represented appropriate naval trophies and the action on Lake Champlain. The supper was prepared in a superior style suitable to the occasion and did much credit to Mrs. Arnot, who provided it. At the head of the supper table the American ensign floated over the head of him who had nobly sustained its honour. In the centre of the table a beautiful glass ship of twenty-six guns, called the Saratoga, rode majestically upon

the blue wave. Above it was seen a gilded figure 1814 of the cock, which, on board that vessel, crowed undauntedly throughout the action. The whole table was arranged in a manner calculated to gratify both the epicure and the admirer of elegant decorations. In point of taste and appropriate effect the ball and supper rooms would not have been unworthy of one of the first cities of the Union. The presence of Commodore Macdonough and his lady produced universal satisfaction, and the countenances of his friends and townsmen expressed the liveliest joy with which they at the same time gave a tribute of affection to their modest, estimable fellow citizen and their homage of respect to the illustrious defender of his country."

During the year the British had maintained an incessant blockade of the American coast, with particularly heavy forces off New London and in Chesapeake Bay. The losses at sea were pretty evenly divided. The frigate *Constitution*, Captain Charles Stewart, captured the schooner *Pictou*, February 14; the frigate *Essex*, Captain David Porter, was compelled to strike to the British frigate *Phoebe*, Captain Hilyar, and the corvette *Cherub*, Captain Tucker, March 28; the American sloop of war *Frolic*, Master Commandant Joseph Bainbridge, was taken by the frigate *Orpheus*, Captain Pigot, and the schooner *Shelburne*, Lieutenant Hope, April 20; the sloop of war *Peacock*, Master Commandant Lewis Warrington, captured the British brig *Epervier*, Captain Wales, April 29; the United States brig *Rattlesnake*, Lieutenant James Renshaw, surrendered to the frigate *Leander*, Captain Collier, June 22; the sloop of war *Wasp*, Master Commandant Johnston

1814 Blakely, took the British brig *Reindeer*, Captain Manners, June 28; the American brig *Syren*, Lieutenant Nicholson, was captured by the frigate *Medway*, Captain Brine, July 12; and the British brig *Avon*, Captain Arbuthnot, was sunk by the *Wasp*, Master Commandant Blakely, September 1. We also lost the frigate *Adams*, which was burned at Hampden, on the Penobscot River, September 3, to prevent her falling into the hands of the enemy. No decisive action had occurred between the forces of Commodores Chauncey and Yeo on Lake Ontario, and the control of Lake Erie and the upper lakes remained in our hands.

It will be remembered that the act of January 2, 1813, authorized the construction of four 74-gun ships. Two of these vessels, the *Independence* and the *Washington*, were launched at Portsmouth, N. H., and Boston respectively during this year.

Toward the end of December the Commodore proceeded to New York to take command of the *Fulton First* agreeably to an order of November 30. The *Fulton First* was a steam vessel of 2,475 tons burden, measured 150 feet in length and 56 feet beam, with a depth of 20 feet. She mounted 30 guns and could throw hot water as well as shot. Her hull, engines and boilers were designed by Robert Fulton, and she was built by A. & N. Brown. Her construction (under the name of a "floating battery") was authorized March 9, 1814, work was begun on her June 20, and she was launched at Corlear's Hook, New York, October 29. Although she was not yet ready for service and did not make her trial trip until June, 1815, Macdonough enjoyed the unique distinction of being the

first commander of the first steam vessel of war in the history of the world. The *Fulton First* met an untimely fate. She blew up in 1829 while in use as a receiving ship, killing and wounding nearly one hundred persons. I have thought it worth while to insert a copy of the Navy Department's order of November 30 because it was the first order ever issued in any navy for an officer to command a steam war vessel. 1814

NAVY DEPARTMENT,

November 30, 1814.

Sir; You will immediately proceed to New York and assume the command of the steam floating battery *Fulton the First*.

I am very respectfully &c.

W. JONES.

CAPT. THOS. MACDONOUGH

Lake Champlain.

The common council took advantage of the Commodore's presence in New York to present him, on January 6, with the freedom of the city. A special meeting was held at one o'clock in the council chamber, but the immense crowd which assembled to witness the ceremony necessitated an adjournment to the large court room. After being introduced to the council by a committee of aldermen, the Commodore was addressed by Mayor De Witt Clinton in the following words: 1815

"When our northern frontier was invaded by a powerful army, when the heroes who have immortalized themselves on the Niagara were pressed by a superior force, when the capital of the nation was overrun by hostile bands, when the most important city of the south was attacked by the enemy, and when he threatened to lay waste our maritime towns with fire and sword —

1815 at a period so inauspicious and gloomy, when all but those who fully understand and duly appreciate the firmness and resources of the American character began to despair of the Republic, you were the first who changed the fortune of our arms and who dispelled the dark cloud that hung over our country. With a force greatly inferior you met the enemy, vaunting of his superior strength and confident of victory, you crushed his proud expectations, you conquered him; and the embattled hosts which were ready to penetrate into the heart of our country fled in dismay and confusion. In discharging the great duties which you owed to America, you did not forget in that trying hour the source of all power and all good; you appealed to that Being in whose hands are the issues of life and the fate of nations, and you completed the glory of the patriot by exhibiting the Christian hero. As long as illustrious events shall be embodied in history, so long will the victory on Lake Champlain, obtained under your auspices, command the respect of mankind. And when you and all who hear me shall be numbered among the dead, those who succeed us, to the most extended line of remote antiquity, will cherish with exultation those great achievements which are indissolubly connected with the prosperity and glory of America."

The freeman's oath was then administered to the Commodore and the certificate of freedom was presented to him in a gold box. He then replied to his honor the mayor by saying: "Sir; With mingled feelings of gratitude and pleasure I receive the honor you have been pleased to confer on me. The title of a freeman of this city, distinguished as much for its high

national character as for its commercial eminence, will **1815** be borne with peculiar pride and satisfaction." Later in the day he was the guest of the common council at a dinner. In the evening the theatre was brilliantly illuminated in his honor. He had just entered and taken his seat at the end of the first act when a fire in the rear of the building brought the performance to a sudden stop.

While in New York he stayed at the home of William Denning, his wife's grandfather. On the evening of the day on which the events just mentioned occurred Mr. Denning wrote his daughter, Mrs. Shaler, of Middletown: "Capt. Macdonough may leave us to-morrow. * * * The Commodore dined with the corporation to-day who have shown him every mark of respect. The mayor called on me after he had seen Mr. Macdonough. Said he thought I might be very proud of such a grandson. I had a very polite invitation to the dinner. I plead with truth my indisposition. In short our city has been alive ever since his arrival, and it is much regretted his stay is not longer. On my own part I was much gratified by his staying with us, although we have been comparatively deprived of his society. This, however, is as it should be. * * * Some alarm has reached the seat of government relating to a British winter expedition to destroy the fleet. In this I do not believe, but it causes his immediate departure. He does not seem to like the command of the steam frigate, not being used to such a vessel."

CHAPTER XIII

1815-1820

Rumors of attack on vessels at Whitehall — Macdonough ordered to Lake Champlain to observe situation — His report to Secretary of the Navy — Expresses hope that he will not be placed in command on Lake Champlain again — Is retained there, however, until close of war — Peace is declared — Visits his home in Delaware — Ordered to Portsmouth navy yard — His failing health — Is presented with sword by state of New York — Ordered to the *Guerrière* at Boston — Sails for Russia with the American Minister — Incidents of the voyage — Arrives in the Mediterranean from Cronstadt — Cruises with the squadron under Commodore Stewart — Relieved of his command by order of the commander-in-chief — Reasons therefor — Ordered to the United States.

1815 ALTHOUGH most of the British naval force on Lake Champlain had been captured, Prevost's army still remained practically intact and there were disquieting rumors of a meditated attack upon the American vessels at Whitehall. Governor Tompkins was very apprehensive that such an attack would be made and he wrote the Commodore that he would be glad of an opportunity to consult with him and the governor of Vermont regarding the security of the American squadron. General Macomb, who remained in command of the post at Plattsburg, was instructed by the Secretary of War to use every practicable means to insure the safety of the vessels. Under date of January 3 Macomb submitted to Lieutenant Budd a comprehensive plan for defending the squadron and informed him that he had requested the War Department to order 2,000 regulars to the head of the lake. The government finally became so fearful that the enemy would undertake a winter expedition against the fleet that

Macdonough was ordered from New York to the lake 1815
to report on the situation. He accordingly left New York January 7 and went directly to Whitehall. The season was unusually mild and the lake was still navigable on January 13. After conferring with Lieutenant Budd regarding the security of the squadron, the Commodore proceeded to Burlington and from there, on the 30th, went to Plattsburg, where he wrote the following report:

MACDONOUGH TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY

PLATTSBURG, February 1, 1815.

Sir; I have the honor to inform you that from the best information to be obtained at this place, and which is believed, the enemy do not meditate an attack on our vessels at Whitehall this winter. No preparations are making by the enemy which indicate such an expedition.

I am sorry, though, to inform you the enemy are, by the best information, preparing to build another naval force on Lake Champlain. This is very generally believed and, indeed, there appears to be no doubt that timber for three frigates, three brigs and several galleys is collecting on Isle aux Noix and that carpenters have arrived on the island. A probability exists, though small, that the timber may be destined for Kingston, Lake Ontario. This will be determined in a few days by persons employed by the commanding general, Macomb.

Should the enemy build to such an extent it will become necessary, if the command of the lake is to be retained, for us to build also, unless we should have a superior force on land to enable our naval force to obstruct the channel from Isle aux Noix to the lake, which at best would be difficult to do and probably the attempt inexpedient. Should it be the determination of government to build, the timber &c. should be got on the ground at Whitehall while the snow affords facility for transportation.

1815 Having satisfied myself agreeably to an order of the Department of the 27th December that an attack on the fleet is not intended by the enemy this winter, I shall proceed, in obedience to an order of the 9th December, to attend the court martial on Major General James Wilkinson at Troy, and from Troy to New York to take command of the steam frigate as directed by the Department, remaining a few days in Middletown, Conn., to settle some personal concerns which my recent orders have prevented my doing, to which I hope you will have no objection, and at Middletown or New York I shall meet any further orders you may be pleased to give me.

In New York I had the honor to suggest the necessity of appointing an officer to command on this lake and to mention Captains Creighton, Angus and Woolsey. The first of these gentlemen would, in my opinion, be a capable officer for the command. I sincerely hope some one may be appointed and that I may not be placed again in command on the lake.

I have the honor to be very respectfully, sir, your most obedient servant,

T. MACDONOUGH.

HON. C. B. CROWNINSHIELD,

Secretary of the Navy, Washington.

In the original draft of this report the Commodore wrote and crossed out the words "that I may not be continued on it where I already have been since the commencement of the war and where, no doubt, many officers equally capable would like to be. It certainly is my wish to give my individual aid to its fullest extent in the war. I only ask to be not continued in the command on Lake Champlain." One reason for requesting to be assigned to duty elsewhere than on the lake was because the severity of the climate, the trying conditions of the service and constant exposure had affected his health, as he wrote the Secretary September 13 of the previous year. The Navy Department

declined his request, however. The 3rd of February 1815 he returned to Burlington and the next day went to Whitehall, where he remained until the close of the war. The intelligence regarding the enemy's preparations for putting another naval force on the lake was found to be correct. A friend of the Commodore's, Matthew Sax, of Chazy, wrote to him March 17: "I have been to Montreal since the war. Much is said to your praise in that country. I had a view of the Isle aux Noix and their preparations for the next campaign. They have 12 new galleys on the stocks of a large size and 3 large vessels with the keels laid and the stem and stern posts up. All is now stopped. They did not expect to be on the lake until September."

On February 17 the Senate ratified the treaty of peace which had been signed at Ghent December 24 of the previous year. There now being no further use for the naval force at Whitehall, the men were sent to Charlestown to prepare the Independence 74 for sea and the vessels were laid up.

Several important naval actions occurred in this year, one before and three after peace had been declared. On January 15 the frigate *President*, Captain Stephen Decatur, was captured by a British squadron consisting of the *razee Majestic*, Captain Hayes, the frigate *Endymion*, Captain Hope, the frigate *Pomone*, Captain Lumly, and the frigate *Tenedos*, Captain Parker; The United States frigate *Constitution*, Captain Charles Stewart, took the frigate *Cyane*, Captain Falcon, and the sloop of war *Levant*, Captain Douglass, February 20; the British brig *Penguin*, Captain Dickenson, struck to the brig *Hornet*, Captain James Bid-

1815 dle, March 23; and on June 30 the brig Nautilus, Lieutenant Boyce, surrendered to the American sloop of war Peacock, Captain Lewis Warrington.

After a short visit to Middletown Macdonough went to Washington to solicit a command in the squadron about to be sent against Algiers under Decatur, but his request was refused. Shortly after (May 13) he was ordered to take charge of the navy yard at Portsmouth, N. H., and to superintend the fitting out of the Washington 74 until the arrival of Commodore Chauncey, who was to command her. On his way to Washington he called on Mr. Robert Smith, former Secretary of the Navy. "He was very glad to see me," the Commodore wrote to Caesar A. Rodney from Washington May 2, "and I am sure I was so to see him, for he was always my friend." On the completion of the business which called him to Washington, he paid a visit to his family at the Trap, Delaware. It was his first visit to his native state in many years and he received a warm and affectionate welcome from his brothers and sisters and an enthusiastic greeting from his friends and neighbors.

In addition to passing numerous acts for the increase of the naval force of the United States, Congress had amended, on February 7, 1815, the several acts for establishing a navy department by adding thereto a Board of Commissioners to consist of three captains, with specific duties. The first members of the Board were Captains John Rodgers, Isaac Hull and David Porter, all appointed April 25, 1815. Regarding the creation of the Board the Commodore wrote this year to his friend Caesar A. Rodney: "The friends of the

navy will rejoice at the prospect of the support the navy 1815
will receive from the Board of Commissioners who have
entered upon their duties. They are a thorough going
set of men, devoted to the interest of the establish-
ment. Their acts will be bottomed upon judgment
and experience."

Macdonough relieved Commodore Isaac Hull in com-
mand of the Portsmouth navy yard July 1. At this
time the following officers were on duty at the yard:
Lieutenants Henry Wells, Joseph Smith and Walter L.
Monteath; Sailing Masters William M. Robins, Samuel
P. Chamberlain, James Ferguson and Nathaniel Stood-
ley; Surgeon Robert L. Thorn; Purser Nathaniel
Lyde; Midshipman Joel Abbot; Captain Archibald
Henderson, of the marine corps; and 1st Lieutenant
Samuel E. Watson, of the marine corps. Beyond fit-
ting out the Washington 74 no work was done on ves-
sels at the yard for the next two years, the entire force
being employed in laying out walks and making prepa-
rations to erect buildings. Quite a number of col-
ored seamen were attached to the yard but they were
discharged by order of the Navy Department and were
not allowed to be employed except as officers' servants.
In 1816 the Commodore again visited Lake Champlain 1816
as a member of a Board to select a site for fortifications
at Plattsburg.

The legislature of the state of New York had voted 1817
him a sword and Governor Tompkins now desired to
present it. The Commodore's health at this time was
too delicate to hazard the consequences of a journey to
Albany, and arrangements were therefore made for the
presentation to take place at Hartford. The following

1817 account of the ceremony is taken from the New York Spectator of February 19, 1817:

HARTFORD, Feb. 15.

Honour to Macdonough. — His honor, the mayor of the city of Hartford, having received from his Excellency the governor of New York polite notice that circumstances had rendered convenient that the ceremony of delivering to Com. Macdonough the sword voted to him by the state of New York should take place in this city on Thursday the 13th inst., proceeded to convene the court of common council, who united with him in the appointment of a committee of arrangement to take measures for a general attendance of the citizens, respectfully to receive the delegation commissioned for the delivery, and duly to honour the arrival of the hero of Champlain.

DELEGATION FROM THE STATE OF NEW YORK FOR THE
DELIVERY OF THE SWORD

Adj. Gen. Solomon Van Rensselaer,
Hon. Henry Seymour, of the Senate,
Wm. A. Duer Esq., of the Assembly,
Col. A. Lamb, aide to Gov. Tompkins,
James King Esq., of Albany.

The delegation arrived on the evening of the 12th in an elegant sleigh, its box presenting the form of a beautiful barge, its stern having this inscription —

MACDONOUGH

The morning of the 13th proved that the day was to be characterized by the extreme of cold — that did not, however, prevent a most zealous devotion to the occasion.

The Commodore was met in Wethersfield and escorted into Hartford by the governor's Horse Guards, under the command of Maj. Buck, and by great numbers of our citizens. His arrival was announced by the discharge of cannon and the ringing of bells.

At 2 P.M. Commodore Macdonough, escorted by the governor's Foot Guards commanded by Major Goodwin, by part of

the committee of arrangement, and by military officers in uniform; and the delegation from the state of N. York, escorted by the artillery under the command of Capt. Ripley, and city authorities, repaired from their respective lodgings to the elevated steps of the Phoenix bank, fronting the state-house, that position favouring the curiosity of the greatest concourse of people witnessed in Hartford since the illumination for peace. The Commodore and the delegates met on the steps of the bank, and the august ceremony commenced. Mr. Duer, of the delegation, bearing in his hand the refulgent meed of modest merit, uncovering and approaching the Commodore, audibly and eloquently addressed to him the following encomium, presenting, at the same time, the reward of heroism: 1817

ADDRESS OF THE DELEGATION BY MR. DUER

COMMODORE MACDONOUGH — We are delegated by the governor of New York to present the sword voted to you by the legislature of the state as a testimonial of the valour, constancy and skill which, under a protecting providence, enabled you to achieve the victory of Lake Champlain.

The splendid triumph obtained by the squadron under your command over a superior British force has secured to you an imperishable name in the annals of the age. It has commanded the applause of distant nations, and called forth the gratitude of your country. That portion of your fellow-citizens, whose sentiments we now convey to you, may not appreciate more highly than the rest your conduct on that memorable day, but as they were more directly benefited by your success, they feel, perhaps, more deeply the value of your services. At no period of the late eventful contest were consequences so important dependent upon the fate of battles. A numerous and well appointed army of the enemy composed of veteran troops, led by experienced generals and flushed with recent conquest, penetrated our northern frontier and by the aid of a formidable naval armament threatened to advance into the bosom of our state. The storm of war was collected in one cloud, and its course directed to one point. In that awful moment of suspense every hope was fixed upon your efforts to avert its fury, and the most sanguine expectations of your country were more than realized. By a masterly position, you compelled the hostile fleet to approach your moorings to certain disadvantage. By the precision of your fire, the promptness of your manœuvres, the discipline and

1817 spirit you had infused into your crews, and by your own undaunted and deliberate valor, you gained a victory as signal as decisive, and as important as any inscribed upon the naval pillar of your country. You captured and destroyed almost the whole of the adverse squadron — you compelled the invading army to retreat — you saved our territory from rapine, our border dwellings from pillage and destruction — their inhabitants from banishment, captivity or death. Services like these cannot be repaid, nor can they be forgotten. Those of our fellow-citizens who, from the surrounding shores, were anxious spectators of the conflict, as they point to the theatre of your glory and their deliverance, will forever associate with the fame of the hero the remembrance of a benefactor. In the presence, therefore, of this brilliant concourse of the freemen of a sister state, and of the authorities of this respectable city, to whom we are so deeply indebted for their co-operation, accept, in the name of the people of New York, this sword, as a token of their heart-felt admiration and the pledge of their lasting recollection of all they owe to you; and, in thus executing the charge confided to us, we should not do justice to the feelings of the patriotic chief magistrate whom we have the honor to represent, were we, on this occasion, to omit the expression of his personal regard, his high sense of your gallantry, his gratitude for your meritorious exertions, and his fervent wishes for your temporal and eternal welfare.

Commodore Macdonough, respectfully bowing to the delegates, gave vent to his emotions in the following reply:

COMMODORE MACDONOUGH'S REPLY

Impressed with a lively sense of the distinguished honor conferred on me by the legislature of the state of New York in the presentation of this sword, I receive it with sentiments of the highest gratification and respect. The munificence of that state, so conspicuous on many occasions, justly entitles her to the high character which she sustains. None have experienced more of her liberality than myself, and I trust none have received it with more gratitude. To the citizens of Hartford my sincere acknowledgments are due for the very prompt and handsome manner in which they have aided his Excellency the governor of the state of New York in the presentation of this sword. I beg his Excellency to accept the assurance of my highest respect and esteem.

ADDRESS TO THE AUDIENCE BY MR. DUER

It is impossible fully to express our obligations to this nu-

merous assemblage of fellow-citizens — to the authorities of our sister state who are here present, and to the magistracy and inhabitants of the city of Hartford in particular — for the liberality and spirit with which they have assisted us to honor the gallant officer who has chosen his abode amongst them. We shall feel it our duty to make such a report of it to the executive authority of our state, under whose commission we have acted, as the occasion demands. 1817

The ceremony ended, a spontaneous and universal burst of acclamation rent the air, *Hail Columbia*, from an excellent band, bearing away its echoes.

The procession now formed to escort the Commodore and the delegation to Morgan's, the place of approaching festivity.

President of the day, Hon. JONATHAN BRACE, mayor; — vice-president, JOHN RUSS, Esq.

Music from the band and patriotic songs accompanied the sentiments proposed after dinner in the following toasts, which were received with reiterated huzzas:

TOASTS

1st. The United States. — May every foreign aggression serve to cement their union.

2d. The President of the United States.

3d. The Governor of the State of Connecticut.

4th. The Governor of the State of New York, whose courtesy allies itself to our present festivity.

5th. The Navy. — Itself the best herald of its importance and of its title to national patronage.

6th. Our Naval Heroes. — They have covered their country with imperishable glory.

7th. The Army. — The records of its valor are on lasting monuments.

8th. The American flag. — In the same skies it finds stars for its insignia and limits for its glory.

9th. The memory of Washington.

10th. The Heroes who achieved our Independence.

11th. The Sailor and the Soldier. —

Unknown, yet honor'd, humble, yet your fame
Wreathes you bright laurels round your hero's name.

- 1817 12th. The Victory on Lake Champlain. — Immortal honors for so brilliant an achievement.
- 13th. Literature and the Arts. — Majestic columns, the supporters of civilization.
- 14th. Agriculture. — The Parent of Independence and the Guardian of Innocence.
- 15th. Cumberland Head. — May every hill of our country which witnesses the approach of an enemy, also witness his defeat.
- 16th. Our native soil. — May it never be marked with the footsteps of an invader.
- 17th. Commerce, Manufactures, and the Mechanic Arts.
- 18th. The free Sovereign and Independent States of the Union, members of one family. — May they unite in seeking the welfare of each other.
- 19th. The Fair.

Their smiles for the virtuous Patriot —
Their tears for the bravely fallen.

VOLUNTEER TOASTS

By COM. MACDONOUGH. — The Citizens of Hartford.

By WM. A. DUER Esq. — May the festivities of this day unite more firmly our neighboring states by the ties of mutual hospitality.

By JUDGE GOULD. — The reign of peace. — May it be as immortal as the valour that guards and the laurels that adorn it.

By THE HON. O. WOLCOTT. — Our Country. — The fame of the illustrious men it has produced is the richest inheritance we can transfer to our posterity.

By MAJOR RUSS, Vice-President. — The State of N. York. — Justly associating gratitude with greatness.

By GEN. TERRY. — The memory of the heroes who have fallen in defense of our country.

How sleep the brave who sink to rest,
By all their country's wishes blest.

By COL. TRUMBULL. — The dying words of the brave Lawrence, who four years from this day captured the sloop of war Peacock — “ Don't give up the ship.”

After Commodore Macdonough had retired.

1817

BY THE MAYOR OF THIS CITY, PRESIDENT OF THE DAY. — Commodore Macdonough.

After the delegation from the state of New York had retired.

BY THE MAYOR. — The delegation from the state of N. York.

The day closed on the happiness of the citizens, the dignity of the delegates, and the honours of Macdonough.

While the state of New York was thus manifesting its gratitude for a great victory won, the victor was fighting against the bodily ills which his arduous labors on Lake Champlain brought in their train. The Commodore's health was such as to cause the gravest concern to his family and friends, and it was thought advisable for him to seek relief in a milder climate. He accordingly solicited and obtained (April 22, 1818) 1818 an order to take command of the 44-gun frigate *Guerrière* and convey the Hon. George W. Campbell, our Minister to Russia, to Cronstadt and then join the Mediterranean squadron. He proceeded at once to Boston, where the *Guerrière* was lying, and superintended her equipment, assisted by his old friend Commodore Bainbridge who was stationed at the Charlestown navy yard. "She was provisioned for a two years cruise, fully repaired, and manned in so short a time as to reflect credit upon all branches of the naval service." On the 3rd of June the frigate moved out into the stream and by the 30th was ready to sail. On July 16 the Secretary of the Navy and the Minister, accompanied by Commodores Bainbridge and Hull, Congressmen Otis, Mason and Silsby, and several government officers, visited the ship and were received with

1818 the customary courtesies. On the 22nd Mr. Campbell with his wife and three children went aboard and two days later the *Guerrière* dropped down to President Roads, where she was compelled to anchor. The next day, July 25, she put to sea. She carried from Boston the following officers:

Commander	Captain Thomas Macdonough
Lieutenant	Joseph Smith
Lieutenant	William L. Gordon
Lieutenant	Charles E. Crowley
Lieutenant	Elie A. F. Vallette
Lieutenant	Bladen Dulany
Lieutenant	Joseph Cross
Lieutenant	Thomas A. Conover
Lieutenant	Joel Abbot
Lieutenant of marines	Lyman Kellogg
Midshipman	John Marshall
Midshipman	Robert Marshall
Midshipman	Samuel S. Turner
Midshipman	William M. Glendy
Midshipman	Charles E. Hawkins
Midshipman	Thomas J. Manning
Midshipman	Thomas B. Worthington
Midshipman	Frederick Engle
Midshipman	Charles T. Platt
Midshipman	Charles Ellery
Midshipman	Robert Harris, Jr.
Midshipman	Walter F. Jones
Midshipman	John C. Jones
Midshipman	Russell Baldwin
Midshipman	A. J. Bennett
Midshipman	Joseph R. Jarvis
Midshipman	Isaac H. Rand
Midshipman	Egbert Shaler
Midshipman	Charles V. Morris
Midshipman	George P. Upshur

Midshipman	Stephen B. Wilson	1818
Midshipman	William S. Walker	
Midshipman	Thomas M. Randolph	
Midshipman	Charles Wilkes, Jr.	
Midshipman	William F. Harris	
Midshipman	Augustus Nicholson	
Midshipman	Griffin Tompkins	
Midshipman	Charles H. Bell	
Surgeon	Usher Parsons	
Purser	James M. Halsey	
Chaplain	Philander Chase, Jr.	
Sailing Master	Samuel C. Hixon	

Among these officers were five future rear admirals — Joseph Smith, Elie A. F. Vallette, Frederick Engle, Charles Wilkes, Jr., and Charles H. Bell. Philander Chase was the son of the Reverend (afterwards Bishop) Philander Chase, of Hartford, Ct. The young man had been admitted a lay reader and a candidate for holy orders under the supervision of Bishop Griswold. This had been done at the instance of the Commodore who knew the youth's pious and manly character, and he now prevailed upon the young man to go to Russia and the Mediterranean in the *Guerrière* in the place and with the pay of a chaplain.

The *Guerrière* was a fine vessel of 1,508 tons and carried 400 officers and men. She was built at Philadelphia in 1814 and was named after the Constitution's prize which was burned at sea in 1812. This was her second cruise, her first having been to the Mediterranean as Commodore Decatur's flagship in 1815. "Her equipment is most complete and effective for the purpose of defense or aggression", commented a London paper while the ship was lying at Cowes a few weeks

1818 later. "She is remarkably clean but nothing appears to be made for mere show. Her bits are extremely large and every rope is led through a separate block; each has its own belaying pin. She mounts on her main deck thirty long twenty-four pounders, on the quarterdeck fourteen forty-two pounder carronades and two long twenty-four pounders, and on the fore-castle forty-two pounder carronades and two long twenty-four pounders. * * * In this ship the most extraordinary attention has been paid to her warfare qualities. Attached to every gun is all the apparatus, including lanterns, swords, pikes, and boarding caps. The tackles are rove through various large sheaved blocks, which considerably lightens the labor and renders the guns capable of being worked much quicker than in our ships. The trucks of the gun carriages are of larger diameter and the axle-trees are much longer, and effectually prevent the guns from upsetting."

For some reason, possibly because some of her ballast had been removed at Charlestown and not replaced, the frigate was very cranky — so much so, in fact, that some of the guns from the quarterdeck and fore-castle and 34,248 pounds of shot from the spar and gun decks were sent below and even the empty water casks were filled from alongside and used as ballast. At Cronstadt between 39 and 40 tons of iron ballast were taken on board and stowed away on end down between the casks of the ground tier. The ship appeared to be unhealthful. "Thirty-two men on the sick list, though no dangerous cases" wrote the Commodore August 10 in the journal which he kept on this cruise. "The ship appears to be unhealthful notwithstand-

ing every precaution is taken to keep her otherwise. 1818
 A fever has prevailed in the ship though we have lost no men yet. The surgeon says it has been in some cases quite malignant. Pump water in and out of the ship to keep her sweet, as she is very tight. Both Mr. and Mrs. Campbell are unwell, Mrs. C. particularly quite so." He wrote again September 13: "On the sick list we have had since leaving the United States from twenty-five to thirty-seven or forty men notwithstanding all necessary and even extraordinary means have been taken and used to keep the crew in a healthy state. The ship, I suspect, has a disposition to be unhealthful, as some unaccountably have, though we have not lost a man from sickness as yet." The following excerpts are from the Commodore's journal which consists mostly of the usual professional comments and observations.

AUGUST 5

Mr. Campbell this day decided on going through the Channel.

AUGUST 20

At about 4 P.M. took a pilot off St. Alban's Head, or a little to the eastward of it, and ran through the Needles and anchored at about 10 in the night at Cowes. Next day moored ship. The Hon. Mr. Campbell and family went on shore to stay a day or two to recruit. The admiral commanding at Spithead (Sir George Campbell, commander-in-chief at Portsmouth) sent his compliments to me, welcomed me to the port, and offered any assistance we might stand in need of. The ship was visited by a great many people of all ranks. Among those who came were Lord Spencer, once in the Admiralty; the Marquis of Buckingham; Mr. Tierney, the leader of the Opposition in Parliament, with his daughter; Admiral Locke; and many officers of the British navy and army. * * *

1818 On the 25th the Hon. Mr. Campbell and family came on board. Got under way at sunset and stood out by Spithead.

AUGUST 31

Anchored at Elsinour on the 31st of August, making a passage from Cape Cod, which we left at sun down on the 26th of July, of 35 days, out of which we lay 4 days in Cowes. An officer visited the ship with the commanding naval officer's compliments and welcomed us to the port and politely said it would be agreeable and a pleasing thing if I would salute the castle, and that as many guns as I thought proper to give the same should be returned by the castle.

SEPTEMBER 1

Got under way and ran up to Copenhagen, where Mr. Campbell and his family went on shore with myself. Saluted the place with 19 guns, which were returned with the same number. The officers visited the place, dock yard &c. Found the people very polite and attentive. The admiral (Linholm) visited the ship and was saluted with 15 guns. Made preparations to sail. Sent a boat ashore for the Minister, the wind being fair for the Baltic. On the 5th the Minister and family came on board.

SEPTEMBER 11

To-day, the anniversary of the battle on Lake Champlain, had all the wardroom officers to take a glass of wine in commemoration thereof; then the officers of the steerage the same.

SEPTEMBER 17

Called on Admiral Muller, the commander at Cronstadt, with the Minister and visited the docks and vessels therein and looked over the town, which is a strongly fortified place with convenient docks &c. both dry and wet. On this place, I was told, 3,000 cannon were mounted; indeed it is lined with them. At 2 in the afternoon the Minister and his family went on board the steamboat, which came alongside, and

went to St. Petersburg. Saluted his departure with 20 guns and manned yards. At 5 saluted the town with 20 guns, which were promptly returned. 1818

Visited St. Petersburg with one half of the officers; the others went up on our return. * * * The weather has been remarkably fine — mild and clear, such as we have at this season in the United States. On the 26th hoisted in the boats and kept ready to sail when the wind would allow it. Was visited by Prince Labanoff, Aide to Emperor Alexander, who expressed much pleasure at the appearance of the ship and regretted that the Emperor could not have the opportunity to visit the *Guerrière*, he being absent at the Congress in Germany. The Prince was received with a salute of 11 guns. When he left the ship in his boat he cheered us, which was returned. Prince Labanoff is a fine looking man and a great friend of the Americans.

OCTOBER 1

I went on board the admiral's ship, whose squadron had anchored the day before at Cronstadt, to pay my respects to him — Admiral Krown, an Englishman, a polite, gentlemanly old man; his ship a 74 as well as those of the line in his squadron. Saluted. The next day the admiral returned my visit and was saluted of course.

The *Guerrière* left Cronstadt October 2 and proceeded to the Mediterranean, not going through the English Channel but around the Shetland Islands. She reached Gibraltar November 12, and after taking on water and provisions sailed on the 16th and joined the *Franklin*, *United States* and *Erie* at Syracuse on December 6th. The squadron, which also included the absent *Spark*, was commanded by Captain Charles Stewart, who displayed his broad pennant on the *Franklin* 74. Leaving Syracuse on the 14th, the squadron ran over to Messina, where it arrived the next

1818 day and remained during the stormy season. The
 1819 United States sailed for home March 10, 1819, and the Franklin, Guerrière and Erie left Messina April 15 to cruise. From April 17 to May 9 they were at Palermo; from May 13 to 31 at Naples; June 3 and 4 at Tunis; June 16 at Malaga; and June 17 the Guerrière anchored in Algeciras Bay, where she was joined a few days later by the Franklin, Erie and Spark. These were all familiar places to Macdonough, for in these waters he had served his apprenticeship under Captain Murray and Commodore Preble, an apprenticeship full of excitement and hard knocks but worth a dozen years of peaceful cruising. As a result of the energetic measures taken by Commodore Decatur in 1815, the Barbary Powers and the United States were now on a friendly footing under the terms of treaties untainted by tribute. At Naples Francis II, Emperor of Austria, and Ferdinand, King of Naples, visited the Franklin and received from the squadron the honors due their rank. The officers of the different vessels were presented to the two sovereigns on board the flagship.

Under date of July 5 the Commodore writes in his journal: "Getting all things ready for sea. At 1.45 P.M. made signal 297 for court martial which was answered by the squadron consisting of the flagship, Erie and Spark. Continues mild and pleasant weather. July 8th was suspended from my command by Commodore Stewart and agreeably to his order gave the ship up to the command of the next senior officer on board, who was Lieut. Gordon. * * * At the same time were suspended with myself Captain Ballard, Cap-

tain Nicholson, Lieut. Commandant Gallagher and 1819
Lieut. Page for alleged improper conduct observed
towards the commander-in-chief as members of a court
martial." Macdonough refers but briefly in his journal
and in his autobiography to the reason for the suspen-
sion from duty of the members of the court of which
he was president.

On May 26, while the squadron was lying in the Bay
of Naples, Commodore Stewart ordered a court martial
to be held on the *Guerrière* for the trial of Robert
Sloane, a marine, who had murderously assaulted one
of the Franklin's crew. The court, consisting of Cap-
tain Macdonough (president), Master Commandant
H. C. Ballard, Master Commandant J. J. Nicholson,
Lieutenant John Gallagher, Lieutenant Benjamin Page
Jr., and Purser Benjamin F. Bourne (judge advocate),
convened on board the *Guerrière* the 28th at 10 A.M.
After the evidence was heard and the sentence passed,
the court adjourned at 1.50 P.M. to meet the next day
on shore at Naples in consequence of the indisposition
of the judge advocate. Having revised and signed
the record at Naples the following day, the court ad-
journed *sine die*. The proceedings and sentence being
sent to Commodore Stewart for his approval were by
him declared to be illegal and of no effect in the fol-
lowing communication to the judge advocate, a copy
of which was also sent to the president of the court:

COMMODORE STEWART TO MACDONOUGH

U. S. S. FRANKLIN,
(Copy) BAY OF NAPLES, May 31st, 1819.

The commander-in-chief of the squadron in consideration
of the foregoing proceedings of the court being illegally held on

1819 the last day of the meeting of the said court in the city of Naples, where the U. States of America have no jurisdiction, and it being there held in violation of the order contained in the warrant dated May 26, 1819, directing the same to be held on board the U. S. frigate *Guerrière*, directs the prisoner to be released and considers the proceedings null and void. The commander-in-chief presuming this to have arisen on the part of the court through inadvertence is willing to pass it over without further notice, but recommends to the court more caution in future that culprits deserving punishment may not escape justice to the prejudice of the public service.

CHAS. STEWART.

THOS. MACDONOUGH, Esq.,

President General Naval Court Martial.

Commodore Stewart revived the court by signal to receive this communication and the court convened for that purpose on board the *Guerrière* at 11 A.M. the same day (May 31). His communication having been received, the commander-in-chief considered the court to be dissolved although he gave no order to that effect. The court was of the opinion that the commodore's letter should form part of its record and he was asked to return the latter, which he did. The court was further of the opinion that the language used by the commander-in-chief in his communication was virtually a censure upon its proceedings — an unjustifiable interference with the deliberations of the court which, as a body, was independent of his control and beyond the reach of his reproof. Not having been dissolved by the commodore's order the court considered itself still in existence and resolved to convene again for the purpose of asserting its honor and dignity.

As the squadron was under orders to sail for Alge-

ciras Bay the afternoon of the 31st no further action 1819 was taken at the time. On the 5th of July, while the squadron was lying at Gibraltar, the president of the court (Macdonough) signalled the members to meet on the *Guerrière*. A resolution embodying the court's opinion as to its rights as a body and its status with relation to the authority of the commander-in-chief was passed and sent to Commodore Stewart. He replied that he considered the resolution grossly disrespectful and an attempt to impugn his personal and official motives. "The members of the court disavow such an intention", was the response, "and offer their tribute of respect to the person and character of the commander-in-chief, but sustain the opinion of their corporate rights and the resolution founded thereon." The commodore's answer to this took the following form, orders similar in effect being sent at the same time to the other members of the court:

COMMODORE STEWART TO MACDONOUGH

U. S. SHIP FRANKLIN,
GIBRALTAR BAY, July 8, 1819.

Sir; You will be pleased to transfer to the officer next in command to yourself on board the *Guerrière* all general orders, rules and regulations, and all orders appertaining to the service to you addressed which remain to be executed wholly or in part, and consider yourself suspended from your office and the duties thereof until further orders.

I remain, sir, your most obdt. servt.

CHS. STEWART.

CAPTAIN THOMAS MACDONOUGH,
U. S. Frigate *Guerrière*.

On July 21 Commodore Stewart informed Macdonough that the *Guerrière* was about to be detached tem-

- 1819** porarily from the squadron and asked whether he preferred to continue on the ship or remain at Gibraltar. Macdonough chose to stay with the ship. The same day (July 21) the *Guerrière* sailed from Gibraltar and arrived off Leghorn August 5, when Captain C. B. Thompson took command. On August 19 she left Leghorn for Cape De Gatt, off which she arrived the 26th and cruised until September 18th, when she bore up for Gibraltar. The *Erie* was ordered to the United States soon after and she reached New York January
- 1820** 21, 1820, having on board all the suspended members of the court, who had been ordered home by direction of the President.

CHAPTER XIV

1820-1825

Members of the Sloane court martial acknowledge their error — Macdonough ordered to resume command of the *Guerrière* — Declines on account of his health and is given the *Ohio* 74 — Presented by Connecticut with pair of gold mounted pistols — Visits Vermont and Lake Champlain — Receives gold mounted sword from crew of the *Guerrière* — His family — Ordered to the *Constitution* at New York — Sails for the Mediterranean and assumes command of the American squadron in those waters — Superseded by Commodore Rodgers — Death of his wife — Relieved of the command of the *Constitution* at his own request and sails for the United States — His death at sea — Letter from Dr. Turk describing the Commodore's last hours — Funeral ceremonies at New York — Taken to Middletown and buried with military honors beside his wife.

THE members of the court immediately reported 1820 their return to the United States and were directed to remain at New York until further orders. Macdonough asked for, and received, permission to await further instructions at Middletown. On the 16th of February he wrote the Secretary of the Navy that he had received legal advice in which he had the fullest confidence, that he regretted he did not have the benefit of this advice at the time of the proceedings in the Mediterranean, that as a result of it he now saw the affair in a somewhat different light, that the other members of the court shared his sentiments, and he asked for orders, or permission, to go to Washington and discuss the matter with the Secretary personally. The desired permission was granted, and on March 10, while in Washington, he addressed a letter to the Secretary saying: "From a misconception of the law the court erred, and I act in accordance with my ideas of

1820 service and sense of propriety to acknowledge it without any hesitation." The high standing of the members of the court and the ingenuous admission of their error caused their representations to have the weight to which they were entitled. Macdonough was directed to return to the Mediterranean and resume command of the *Guerrière*. As Commodore Stewart was still in command of the Mediterranean squadron, this order implied that the Department did not consider that he had been personally reflected upon by the members of the court, otherwise Macdonough would certainly not have been restored at once to duty under him.

Grateful as the order to rejoin the *Guerrière* no doubt was as expressing the sentiments of the Navy Department respecting his conduct, the Commodore felt obliged to request a different assignment on account of his health and on March 11 was accordingly appointed to command, when launched, the Ohio 74 building at New York. In commenting on this appointment the *National Intelligencer* of Washington said: "We learn with great pleasure that Captain Macdonough has been appointed to command the line of battle ship now building at New York when she shall be in a state to receive her commander. Captain Macdonough having become sensible that the course pursued by the court martial, of which he was a member, and which led to the officers composing said court being ordered home, was incorrect, with that magnanimity which bespeaks a great mind, acknowledged his error to the chief of the Navy Department, who has taken the earliest opportunity of restoring this gallant officer to the service. This appointment will, of course,

afford additional pleasure when it is recollected that 1820 it is made without impairing that subordination which is so essential to our naval service."

The transfer from a 44 to a 74 was an actual promotion and emphasized the Department's view of the court martial matter. As the *Ohio* would not be afloat for some two months, the Commodore returned to Middletown. In the latter part of May Captain Samuel Evans wrote to him from New York that the ship would be launched on the 30th of that month and invited him to be present. Punctually on the day appointed the *Ohio* was put into the water. She was a splendid vessel of her class and compared favorably with any 74 afloat. Her length was 198 feet; beam, 54.6 feet; tonnage, 2,757; and she carried a complement of 820 officers and men. After being completed she was retained at the Brooklyn navy yard until October, 1837, when she was partially manned and taken around to Boston by Captain Lawrence Kearney and fitted for sea.

During his visit to Washington in March he was frequently in the company of his friend Commodore Stephen Decatur, who, at that time, was a member of the recently created navy Board of Commissioners. Decatur's untimely death on March 22nd was a great shock to him and he felt the loss keenly. At the funeral, which was on the afternoon of the 24th of March, the pall bearers were Commodores Rodgers, Tingey, Chauncey, Porter and Macdonough, Captains Ballard and Cassin, and Lieutenant Macpherson, all of the navy, and Generals Brown and Jessup of the army.

The next four years of the Commodore's life were

1820 spent mostly at his home in Middletown, although he was still in command of the *Ohio*. His health improved, and while he was debarred from performing the more severe and arduous duties of his profession he was still able to serve his country in eminently useful though inconspicuous ways. He was a frequent member of courts martial and his unprejudiced and candid mind, keen discernment and calm, deliberate judgment made him a valuable associate in those tribunals. His professional knowledge made him an exceedingly desirable member of boards for the examination of junior officers, and in the wider field embraced by his general qualifications as an officer and a seaman the Navy Department found at all times a head and hand devoted to the interests of the service.

Soon after his arrival from the Mediterranean he was formally notified by Governor Oliver Wolcott, of Connecticut, that the state had voted to present him with a pair of pistols in commemoration of the action on Lake Champlain September 11, 1814, and these were now bestowed upon him with appropriate ceremonies. In the summer of this year (1820) he journeyed through Vermont and visited the places where he and his gallant associates had made history six years before. There was now peace and plenty among the dwellers on the lake. The song of the sword had ceased and the door was no longer barred against the midnight marauder. The people of the Champlain valley opened wide their arms and gave him a royal welcome.

1821 Shortly after this an incident occurred which touched the Commodore deeply. It will be recalled that on the 8th of July, 1819, he was suspended from the command

of the *Guerrière* by order of Commodore Stewart. It was understood at the time that he would return to the United States at the first opportunity, and the crew of the frigate contributed \$1,500 for the purchase of a sword to be presented to their late commander as a token of their regard. On hearing of this action Macdonough was much affected and feelingly expressed regret that he could not accept the intended gift, but with increased attachment for the unassuming character of the man who had led many of them to victory the crew insisted on carrying out their intentions. The sword was made in England and sent to the United States, the government remitting the usual duty by special act of Congress. 1821

In notifying the Commodore of the arrival of the sword at New York, Midshipman Russell Baldwin, representing the donors, wrote: "About the time of your leaving the Mediterranean for the United States the ship's company of the *Guerrière*, being duly impressed with a sense of their obligation to you for the solicitude you ever evinced for their comfort and happiness, with their characteristic liberality subscribed the sum of three hundred guineas to be applied to the purchase of a sword to be presented to you as a memento of their regard and esteem." The gift was delivered at Middletown by Lieutenant Conover in behalf of the *Guerrière's* crew with an appropriate address, to which the Commodore replied: "It is to me a most pleasing circumstance to receive so handsome an expression of the good feeling of the crew of the United States frigate *Guerrière*, a crew distinguished for their activity and good conduct when I had the honor to

1821 command that ship; and when our country again requires our services my greatest desire would be to embark with such men in the maintenance of her rights and honor."

The sword is beautifully and heavily mounted in gold, the mounting showing exquisitely wrought symbols of peace and war. On one side of the scabbard is a view of the battle on Lake Champlain, with the famous cock perched in the rigging of the Saratoga, and on the other side is the inscription "The Crew of the U. S. S. *Guerrière* to Captain Thos. Macdonough, 8 July, 1819." The blade, which is beautifully etched, bears on one side the motto "No Impressment," and on the other "Maintain Your Rights."

The Commodore's married life was the happiest imaginable. He was blessed with a charming and devoted wife to whom he was equally devoted. Ten children* were born to them, five of whom died young. The last of the children, Augustus Rodney Macdonough, died recently in New York city. The family were members of Holy Trinity parish (then called Christ Church), and in 1821 and 1823 the Commodore was a delegate

* 1. A son who died young.

2. Thomas Nathaniel, born October 25, 1814; died June 20, 1816.

3. James Edward Fisher, born April 12, 1816; died unmarried May 13, 1849.

4. Mary Ann Louisa, born June 6, 1817; died December 5, 1817.

5. Charles Shaler, }
6. William Joseph, } twins, born June 28, 1818. The former married Clara,

daughter of William G. and Anna (Garr) Hackstaff, October 18, 1855, and had issue; died December 1, 1871. The latter died February 14, 1821.

7. Augustus Rodney, born November 20, 1820; married Frances Brenton McVickar, June 10, 1846. She died December 6, 1846. He died July 21, 1907.

8. Thomas, born July 11, 1822; married first Hilda Palmer and had no issue; married second Mary Oakley June 6, 1867, and had issue; died June 25, 1894.

9. Frances Augusta, born September 20, 1823; died October 4, 1824.

10. Charlotte Rosella, born June 23, 1825; married Henry G. Hubbard June 19, 1844, and had issue; died March 4, 1900.

to the diocesan convention. His home was on Main Street, where the building of the Young Men's Christian Association now stands. In 1818 he purchased this property from the estate of his father-in-law, Nathaniel Shaler, and erected thereon what was then considered a handsome and commodious house. The property passed out of the hands of the family some time ago, but the house remained standing and was used for various purposes up to within a few years, when it was torn down to make room for the present building. 1821

At various times between 1820 and 1824 the Commodore applied for service afloat, but without avail. On January 22, 1822, he wrote to the Secretary of the Navy: "I consider myself too young to remain so long inactive on shore. I have seen but little service of late years at sea and I am desirous of employing myself in the arts of my profession." He wrote again September 20, 1823: "I have long since considered it a point of duty an officer owes his country to keep in exercise and a state of improvement his professional faculties in order that he may the better perform such services as may be required of him; and in the present disturbed state of Europe the time may not be far distant when the officers of our navy may be called upon to act a part very different from the peaceful manner in which they have for some years past been employed. It therefore becomes them to seek all opportunities to improve themselves, that they may go forward with confidence and ease when that time shall arrive." 1822 1823

Although the Commodore's time was spent either in

- 1823 Middletown or in the performance of various duties elsewhere, he was still officially in command of the
- 1824 Ohio. On May 31, 1824, he was ordered to the Constitution at New York. This gallant frigate, of glorious memory, was his last command. She sailed from New York October 29, 1824, and from Sandy Hook the next day. Her officers were:

Commander	Captain Thomas Macdonough
1st Lieutenant	E. A. F. Vallette
Lieutenant	T. W. Wyman
Lieutenant	Samuel W. Downing
Lieutenant	Josiah Tattnall
Lieutenant	William M. Armstrong
Lieutenant	Joseph Cross
Lieutenant of marines	Henry B. Tyler
Midshipman	John Pope
Midshipman	Richard H. Morris
Midshipman	Allen A. Harwood
Midshipman	John H. Marshall
Midshipman	Charles C. Turner
Midshipman	Lloyd B. Newell
Midshipman	Richard D. Millen
Midshipman	Edward S. Lewis
Midshipman	R. G. Robb
Midshipman	Amasa Paine
Midshipman	P. A. Stockton
Midshipman	Charles W. Armstrong
Midshipman	Edward Hoban
Midshipman	Joseph Arnold
Midshipman	James H. Ward
Midshipman	John T. Jenkins
Midshipman	A. H. Edwards
Midshipman	James A. Hemphill
Midshipman	G. Gansevoort
Midshipman	Henry W. Morris
Midshipman	John W. Mooers



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U. S. FRIGATE CONSTITUTION
(From the painting by Marshall Johnson)

Midshipman	Gray Skipwith	1824
Midshipman	Augustus Barnhouse	
Midshipman	James B. Glentworth	
Midshipman	James E. Calhoun	
Midshipman	Samuel Swartwout	
Surgeon	William Turk	
Purser	John B. Timberlake	
Chaplain	John McCarty	

The Constitution arrived at Gibraltar November 24. The Commodore was the senior officer on the station and by virtue of his rank was in command of the United States naval force in the Mediterranean, consisting of the flagship and the Cyane, Ontario and Erie. On this cruise he took with him his son Augustus Rodney, named after his friend Cæsar Augustus Rodney of Delaware. In December the Navy Department decided to appoint Commodore John Rodgers to the command of the Mediterranean squadron, and that officer accordingly sailed from Hampton Roads March 28, 1825, in the North Carolina, arriving at Gibraltar April 29. 1825

It was now evident that the malady against which Macdonough had fought with so much courage and patience must soon terminate fatally. With the inner realization that his recovery was hopeless and that his days were numbered there came a blow from without that was crushing in its effect — the death of his beloved wife. In some way, I do not know how, the news that she had died reached the officers of the Constitution before it became known to the Commodore, and Lieutenant Tattnall was selected to impart the sad tidings to their commander.

1825 Conscious that the sands of life would soon be run, oppressed by his great sorrow, and with an intense longing to see his native land once more before he died, he turned the Constitution over to Captain Daniel T. Patterson at Gibraltar October 14 and sailed for home in the merchant brig Edwin the 24th of the same month, accompanied by his son and Dr. Turk. But the wish to set foot again upon his native soil was denied him by One who doeth all things well, and on the 10th of November, when the brig was some six hundred miles from port, his pure and noble spirit entered the haven of eternal rest.

On the arrival of the Edwin at Philadelphia the following letter was sent by Dr. Turk to Mrs. Shaler, Mrs. Macdonough's mother:

DR. TURK TO MRS. SHALER

BRIG EDWIN, RIVER DELAWARE, NOV. 24, 1825.

Dear Madam; The painful duty devolves upon me of informing you of the death of the late Commodore Thomas Macdonough, which took place about noon on Thursday the 10th instant. We left Gibraltar on the 24th day of October, bound to New York, with a fair prospect of his reaching home alive, but He who rules the destinies of men has ordered it otherwise. We had favorable winds and weather until the day after his death and had made our passage across the Atlantic within six hundred miles when the most unpleasant weather set in, since which we have had to contend with the most boisterous weather with a succession of the most terrible gales, and were finally obliged to put into this port.

Commodore Macdonough failed so fast a few days before his death as to be conscious himself that his end was approaching. I asked him if he had anything in particular to communicate. He answered that he had not; that all his affairs were arranged; that he only wished me to make him as com-

fortable as possible and that his death might be easy. In this 1825
 he had his wish, for I never witnessed a death before so perfectly free from pain and distress. He fixed his eyes upon me with fortitude and composure and appeared to have fallen gently to sleep.

The day but one before his death he desired me to draw up a paper leaving a small sum of money to his servant, William Green, which he signed in my presence. The servant above mentioned can never be sufficiently praised for his constant and faithful attention to his master's wants for the whole year that he was with him.

The Commodore retained his faculties to the last and spoke to me rationally and intelligibly but a few moments before he expired. Anticipating the possibility of his dying on the passage, he spoke of his aversion to being thrown into the sea and expressed a wish that his body should be taken home for interment. I therefore made the necessary preparations and his remains are still on board with me. As it is my intention to proceed on to New York with them and Rodney (who is in good health), I wish some relation of my deceased friend would meet me at New York, where such measures can be adopted respecting the further disposal of the body as will be most agreeable to you.

I have not time, if it was even advisable, to offer you any consolation under your late bereavements. God is all wise and merciful and you are a Christian. Truly sympathizing with you in your distress, I am with esteem and respect,

Your obedient servant,

W. TURK.

The Navy Department was also apprised by Dr. Turk of the Commodore's death and on the 26th of November the Secretary of the Navy sent the following order to commanders of navy yards, stations and squadrons: "Sir; Captain Thomas Macdonough died on the 10th of this month off the Capes of Delaware on his return from active service in the Mediterranean. It is

1825 proper that a tribute of respect be paid to the memory of a man whose services were so useful to his country and who so eminently united in himself the best qualities of a citizen with the highest reputation as an officer. You will, therefore, on the day after receiving this order, cause the flag to be hoisted at half mast and thirteen minute guns to be fired at 12 o'clock; and you will direct the officers under your command to wear crape on the left arm for thirty days." In a report to the President a few days later the Secretary of the Navy said, referring to Macdonough's death: "His loss is deeply to be deplored both on account of the splendid services he has performed and the useful example of private and public worth which he exhibited to his brother officers."

The Commodore's body reached New York on Sunday the 27th and was placed on board the steam frigate *Fulton First*, which was lying off the navy yard. The common council met on Monday to arrange for the funeral and the city's tribute to the dead commander. At 10 o'clock on Thursday morning, the day appointed for the sad office of grateful affection and respect, the steamboat *Washington* left the navy yard with ten navy barges in tow. On the *Washington* were a detachment of marines and both the marine and the navy yard bands. The first barge contained the body, an officer, and twelve seamen; in the next were the Commodore's son, Augustus Rodney, and other relations, Commodore Chauncey and the chaplains; and in the remaining boats were officers of the navy and sailors. The bands on the *Washington* played the dead march and the barges kept up the minute strokes with muffled

oars, although in tow. At the Battery the party was received by the officers of the army and the procession proceeded up Broadway in the following order: — Detachment of marines with arms reversed; marine band with muffled drums; the body and the pall bearers (Captains G. Rogers, Finch, Shubrick, Leonard, W. Chauncey, Hoffman and Elliott); the Rev. Mr. Rutledge (the Commodore's brother-in-law) with Commodore Chauncey and Macdonough's little son Augustus Rodney; sailors; officers of the navy in reverse order; officers of the army in reverse order. 1825

On its arrival at City Hall the body was received with the highest military honors by a regiment of New York state artillery, and a detail of sturdy seamen bore the coffin into the common council chamber. The procession was then reformed and moved to St. Paul's chapel in the following order: — Clergy; detachment of marines with arms reversed; marine band with muffled drums; the body and the pall bearers (Captains G. Rogers, Finch, Shubrick, Leonard, W. Chauncey, Hoffman and Elliott); the Rev. Mr. Rutledge with the Commodore's little son and Commodore Chauncey; sailors; officers of the navy in reverse order; committee of the corporation with mourning scarfs; Society of the Cincinnati with its time honored banner shrouded in black; officers of the army and of the state militia; foreign consuls; citizens.

After the service at St. Paul's chapel, which was conducted by the Rev. Mr. Jones, chaplain at the navy yard, the march was continued to the foot of Fulton street, where the coffin was placed on board the steamboat Commerce to be taken to Middletown. The

1825 ceremonies ended with the firing of three volleys by the marines. The flags on the public buildings and on the shipping in the harbor were half masted during the entire day, minute guns were fired by detachments of artillery at City Hall park and the Battery, and bells were tolled during the march from City Hall to St. Paul's chapel and thence to the steamboat. A dull and lowering sky accentuated the solemnity of the occasion.

The Commerce left New York Thursday afternoon, but as she was compelled to anchor during the night she did not reach Middletown until Saturday morning December 3. The Rev. Mr. Rutledge, the Commodore's son and Dr. Turk were on board. At 11 o'clock in the morning minute guns were fired at the military academy corresponding in number with the age of the dead officer. At 1 o'clock the body was taken from the house to the Presbyterian church where the Episcopal service was read by the Rt. Rev. Thomas C. Brownell, D.D., Bishop of Connecticut, after which the funeral procession proceeded to Riverside cemetery in the following order:— Music; military escort; physicians; clergy; coffin; mourners; officers of the navy; masters of vessels; officers of the army; Masons; officers of the militia and military companies; judges of the supreme court; mayor and corporation; civil authorities; officers and instructors of the military academy; cadets; citizens.

As the procession moved slowly and reverently toward the cemetery the wailing of the dirge, the mournful tolling of the muffled bells and the dull boom of the minute guns proclaimed a universal grief. The serv-



MONUMENT OVER THE GRAVES OF COMMODORE MACDONOUGH AND HIS
WIFE IN RIVERSIDE CEMETERY, MIDDLETOWN, CONN.

ice at the grave was performed by Bishop Brownell. 1825
The beautiful and solemn ritual of the Church was followed by three volleys of musketry and Macdonough was left to his last long sleep beside his devoted wife and in the soil he loved and fought for. A single monument marks the two graves and bears these inscriptions:

Sacred
to the memory of
Com. Thomas Macdonough
of the U. S. Navy.
He was born in the State of Delaware Dec. 1783, & died at sea of pulmonary consumption while on his return from the command of the American Squadron in the Mediterranean on the 10 Nov. 1825.
He was distinguished in the world as the Hero of Lake Champlain; in the Church of Christ as a faithful, zealous and consistent Christian; in the community where he resided when absent from professional duties as an amiable, upright and valuable citizen.

Sacred
to the memory of
Mrs. Lucy Ann,
Wife of
Com. Thomas Macdonough
& daughter of
Nathaniel & Lucy Ann Shaler.
The richest gifts of Nature & of Grace adorned her mind & heart, & at her death Genius, Friendship & Piety mourned their common loss.

She preceded her husband to the realms
of Glory only a few short months, having
departed this life Aug. 9. 1825, Æ . 35.

They were lovely and pleasant in their lives,
and in their death they were undivided.

CHAPTER XV

Macdonough's death in the prime of life — His personal appearance — A Federalist in politics — A glimpse of his private life — A valuable citizen, a consistent Christian, an able officer.

COMMODORE MACDONOUGH died at the early age of forty-one. There is something inexpressibly sad in the cutting short of a young and active life. One is apt to feel that fruitful as may have been the promises of earlier years, their fruition was but an earnest of a broader, richer, fuller life to come. He so improved the opportunities which came to him of displaying his usefulness as a citizen and his ability as an officer that one cannot but regret that it was not given him to apply the mature experience of riper years to the responsibilities of private and official life.

In person Commodore Macdonough was tall, dignified and commanding. His features were regular and pleasing. His hair and complexion were light and his eyes were blue, but the firmness and steadfastness of his look took away all appearance of the want of virile, masculine energy which is often associated with a delicate complexion. His early country training gave him an active, vigorous frame, easily capable of enduring not only the many hard knocks which were the ordinary lot of a midshipman, but also the rigorous duties imposed later by the exigencies of his profession. The trying conditions of the service on Lake Champlain proved too much for him, however, and were directly responsible for his early death.

In politics he was a Federalist. He was born in a Federal state, Delaware, but he was too young to form any political opinions before he left there. During his first nine years of service he was almost constantly on active sea duty, more than half that time in foreign waters, and although it is possible yet it is hardly likely that during that period he paid much attention to party affairs. In the latter part of 1809 he was ordered to Connecticut, where he spent a large portion of the next two years and a half. Connecticut was strongly Federal and it was there he probably became imbued with the principles of that party. But whatever his political affiliations were he did not permit them to interfere with either his duty as an officer or his personal and official relations with his fellows. In a letter written at Hartford, probably before the battle on Lake Champlain, by Bishop Chase's son George to his cousin Intrepid Morse is the curious passage: "The gallant Com. McD———— was confirmed with us two or three years since. Perhaps you do not remember him, as his utmost exertions had procured him little celebrity on the lake. The Secretary of the Navy is his bitterest enemy merely because he is a Federalist. Such conduct ought at once to displace him from office. * * * His bravery is needless for me to mention. He has proved it by the most glorious actions." The Commodore was intimately acquainted with the Chase family and it is barely possible that his young friend George Chase knew of some real or fancied grievance due to political animosity, but it is much more likely that his denunciation of the Secretary of the Navy was due to youthful imagination or

exaggeration. There is nothing in the Commodore's official or private correspondence to indicate that his relations with the head of the Navy Department at this time were not entirely cordial.

It is to be regretted that so few of the Commodore's personal letters have been preserved for they would doubtless have added considerably to our knowledge of his character and would have revealed much of interest in his private life. Among the few letters which remain are two written in 1822 to his sister Lydia in Delaware. To her he wrote with the utmost freedom, as might be expected of a brother, expressing the most affectionate interest in the welfare of his sisters and brothers and particularly of his orphan nephews and nieces, inquiring as to the needs of the latter and offering to assist them out of his own means. "I have now and then a hundred dollars or so to spare if I could apply it to the advantage of my nieces and nephews", he writes, "but as I consider it necessary that the latter will be obliged to learn trades, would it not be proper to let them persevere in habits of industry which is proper in all situations in life, and when out of their apprenticeship some little to help them to set up in business might do well. * * * It may be supposed that I am a man of large property, but I am not. My expenses are necessarily great, and if I educate my children well not much will be left to them. Still, as I said before, I can spare a little to better the condition (it may be) of my little nieces and nephews."

One boy, James Thomas, the son of his brother Samuel, he brought up from Delaware and practically adopted. "He is now at the best academy in the

state", he wrote his sister, "and is treated in all respects like my own children." The Commodore had no sympathy with idleness or idlers. Lydia wrote him that another nephew, Thomas Pennington, whom she described as not over fond of work, had left Delaware with the intention of seeking his uncle and asking assistance. "Thos. Pennington has not come here", the Commodore replied. "I have seen or heard nothing of him. If he does come I shall take such measures with him as he will little expect."

He called Middletown his home, and although his duties necessitated frequent absences he apparently took as lively an interest in the welfare of the community as did those whose lives were spent within its borders. No plan which promised to promote the social, civil or religious interests of his fellow townsmen was without his sympathy and support. His charity was broad and catholic and of his own he gave generously. He entered freely into the life around him and the duties and responsibilities of citizenship were discharged as conscientiously as were those of his profession. He was the soul of honor and punctilious in the discharge of every social and moral duty.

Prior to 1814 Macdonough's name was comparatively unknown outside the navy. His brilliant services in that year, however, gained him a national reputation and made his name a household word. Cities and states crowned him with honors, and Congress testified its appreciation of his gallant achievement. A mind more easily influenced might readily have been affected by the incense of admiration and the subtle flattery of public applause, but these left him as modest

and unassuming as before. While he was profoundly grateful for every mark of confidence and esteem, he considered that he had only done his duty and that any expression of gratitude was wholly unmerited.

One of Macdonough's strongest characteristics was a sincere belief in the teaching of the Episcopal Church. The development of his religious feeling began at his mother's knee. External influences during the years which immediately followed his entrance into the service were not particularly conducive to spiritual growth. The atmosphere which he found at Middletown, however, was of an entirely different character. Not only his wife's family but also their friends, who became his friends as well, were members of the Church and had been for years. The daily companionship of those he loved and familiar intercourse with those whose characters he admired and respected soon had their effect upon a nature peculiarly responsive to religious impressions. It needed only the influences which there surrounded him to quicken the seed sown in earlier years and bring it to maturity. He was confirmed at the age of twenty-nine by that faithful servant of the Church, Bishop Chase.

The Commodore's religion was an essential part of his character. It was not a garment to be assumed or cast aside as taste or convenience dictated. It was unostentatious and unobtrusive. It was wholly personal and had more to do with his own heart than with the conduct of others. He regulated his own affairs by the dictates of his conscience and endeavored to influence other lives by the purity of his own. His faith was that of a little child, simple and trusting.

His motto might have been that of the Scottish patriot — “ God Armeth Me ” — for his confidence in the Almighty Power to save in peace or war never wavered. The most beautiful act of his life, an act which showed him true to himself and true to his God, was at that supreme moment when, on the deck of the *Saratoga*, he publicly proclaimed Christ before men and invoked his aid in the coming battle.

Macdonough is best known to the world as an officer in the navy of the United States. He combined the qualities most necessary to a successful commander and his professional reputation was of the highest. Two instances have already been mentioned of his popularity with his crews, once when the crew of the *Essex* wrote him a letter and again when the crew of the *Guerrière* presented him with a sword. He was kind to his men, regardful of their comfort, and endeavored to promote their general welfare in every way. “ He was remarkable ”, writes a contemporary, “ for the mildness of his manners and yet peculiar for his enforcement of discipline.” These qualities endeared him to his brother officers as well as to his men. Those who served under him once were anxious to serve under him again. Among his private papers are many letters from commissioned, warrant and petty officers asking for assignments to duty under his command.

His officers were greatly attached to him. Lieutenant Sidney Smith, who was in charge of the *Growler* and *Eagle* when they were captured in the Richelieu River in 1813 and who was afterward exchanged, wrote to him later regarding a court of inquiry on their loss

and signed himself "from a friend that loves you." There are many other instances of this feeling of personal affection inspired by the Commodore in those surrounding him. He possessed, in a high degree, that fine chivalric courtesy associated with noble lives and noble deeds — the courtesy which prompted his toast "The memory of Commodore Downie, our brave enemy."

Prior to 1812 he had performed the usual duties of a naval officer in time of peace, had seen a little service in the quasi war with France, and had been in the thick of the hot work before Tripoli. During these years he acquired a vast amount of practical and theoretical knowledge pertaining to his profession and when he was ordered to Lake Champlain he was in every way fitted for an independent command. The gradual development of the situation on that lake called into prominent activity all his resources as an officer. If a thing was to be done, he saw that it was done at once and done well. If necessity required he was not above lending a helping hand himself. He worked shoulder to shoulder with his men in preparing the first little squadron for service. His patience, perseverance and tireless energy enabled him to collect, man and equip his vessels in the face of the most discouraging conditions, and his superb self reliance, forethought and tactical skill gained him the victory over a "confident, vigorous and powerful foe." Taking into consideration all the circumstances attending the action, the defeat of the British squadron stamped him as one of the ablest officers of his time. Roosevelt's estimate of the Commodore's qualities as an

officer is summed up in the following words: "Down to the time of the Civil War he is the greatest figure in our naval history. A thoroughly religious man, he was as generous and humane as he was skillful and brave. One of the greatest of our sea captains, he has left a stainless name behind him."

During his twenty-five years of naval life Macdonough conscientiously discharged every obligation imposed upon him by his commission. The written laws of the service and the unwritten laws of naval custom and usage were scrupulously observed. Afloat or ashore, at home or abroad, he was faithful to the interests committed to his care. He served his country with a single heart and gallantly upheld the reputation of the service and the honor of the flag.

APPENDIX

A

The opinion of the Court of Inquiry held at Sackett's Harbor, on board the U. S. Brig Jones, April 4, 1815.

The Court are unanimously of opinion that the general conduct of Lieutenant Sidney Smith on Lake Champlain was correct and meritorious. The Court are further of opinion that the sloops Growler and Eagle were lost in consequence of their being taken too far below the lines in a narrow channel where there was not room for them to work and where they were exposed to musketry from the shore. The Court, however, taking into consideration the practicability of a successful attack by the enemy on the sloops while lying at anchor at Champlain and badly manned, the assurance of Captain Herrick that his company would be withdrawn the next day, and being satisfied by the testimony that Lieutenant Smith was deceived by his pilot, are of opinion that the sloops Growler and Eagle, when attacked by a superior force, were gallantly defended and that they were not surrendered until all further resistance had become vain.

MELANCTHON T. WOOLSEY,
President.

Approved, SAMUEL LIVERMORE,
B. W. CROWNINSHIELD. Judge Advocate.

B

Report relating to the battle on Lake Champlain September 11, 1814, received from Commodore Macdonough and transmitted by the Secretary of the Navy to the Chairman of the Senate Naval Committee.

NAVY DEPARTMENT, October 3, 1814.

Sir; In compliance with your request I have now the honor to enclose copies of all the documents received from Captain Macdonough in relation to the brilliant and extraordinary victory achieved by the United States squadron under his command over that of the enemy in Plattsburg Bay, on Lake Champlain.

This action, like that of its prototype on Lake Erie, cannot be portrayed in language corresponding with the universal and just admiration inspired by the exalted prowess, consummate skill, and cool, persevering intrepidity, which will ever distinguish this splendid and memorable event.

This, like those brilliant naval victories which preceded it, has its peculiar features which mark it with a distinct character. It was fought at anchor. The firm, compact and well formed line; the preparations for all the evolutions of which the situation was susceptible; and the adroitness and decisive effect with which they were performed in the heat of battle mark no less the judgment which planned than the valor and skill displayed in the execution.

All these are heightened by the contemplation of a vigorous and greatly superior foe moving down upon this line in his own time, selecting his position and choosing his distance, animated by the proximity of a powerful army in co-operation and stimulated by the settled confidence of victory.

To view it in abstract, it is not surpassed by any naval victory on record. To appreciate its result, it is perhaps one of the most important events in the history of our country.

That it will be justly estimated and the victors duly honored by the councils of the nation, the justice and liberality hitherto displayed on similar occasions is a sufficient pledge.

I have the honor to be, very respectfully, sir, your obedient servant,

W. JONES.

THE HON. CHARLES TATE,

Chairman of the Naval Committee of the Senate.

U. S. SHIP SARATOGA,
OFF PLATTSBURG, September 11th, 1814.

Sir; The Almighty has been pleased to grant us a signal victory on Lake Champlain in the capture of one frigate, one brig and two sloops of war of the enemy.

I have the honor to be very respectfully, sir, your obt. servt

T. MACDONOUGH, Com'g

HONBLE W. JONES,
Secretary of the Navy.

U. S. SHIP SARATOGA, AT ANCHOR
OFF PLATTSBURG, September 13th, 1814.

Sir; By Lieut. Commt. Cassin I have the honor to convey to you the flags of his Britannic Majesty's late squadron captured on the 11th inst. by the United States squadron under my command. Also my despatches relating to that occurrence, which should have been in your possession at an earlier period but for the difficulty in arranging the different statements.

The squadron under my command now lies at Plattsburg. It will bear of considerable diminution and leave a force sufficient to repel any attempt of the enemy in this quarter. I shall wait your order what to do with the whole or any part thereof, and should it be consistent, I beg you will favor me with permission to leave the lake and place me under the command of Commodore Decatur at New York. My health (being some time on the lake) together with the almost certain inactivity of future naval operations here are among the causes for this request of my removal.

I have the honor to be, sir, with much respect yr mot ob't st
T. MACDONOUGH.

HONBLE WM. JONES,
Secretary of the Navy.

U. S. SHIP SARATOGA,
PLATTSBURG BAY, Sept. 13th, 1814.

Sir; I have the honor to give you the particulars of the action which took place on the 11th inst. on this lake.

For several days the enemy were on their way to Plattsburg by land and water, and it being well understood that an attack would be made at the same time by their land and naval forces, I determined to await at anchor the approach of the latter.

At 8 A.M. the lookout boat announced the approach of the enemy. At 9 he anchored in a line ahead at about 300 yards distance from my line, his ship opposed to the *Saratoga*, his brig to the *Eagle*, Capt. Robt. Henley, his galleys, thirteen in number, to the schooner, sloop and a division of our galleys, one of his sloops assisting their ship and brig, the other assisting their galleys. Our remaining galleys with the *Saratoga* and *Eagle*. In this situation the whole force on both sides became engaged, the *Saratoga* suffering much from the heavy fire of the *Confiance*. I could perceive at the same time, however, that our fire was very destructive to her. The *Ticonderoga*, Lt. Commt. Cassin, gallantly sustained her full share of the action. At $\frac{1}{2}$ 10 the *Eagle*, not being able to bring her guns to bear, cut her cable and anchored in a more eligible position between my ship and the *Ticonderoga*, where she very much annoyed the enemy but unfortunately leaving me exposed to a galling fire from the enemy's brig. Our guns on the starboard side being nearly all dismounted or not manageable, a stern anchor was let go, the bower cable cut and the ship winded with a fresh broadside on the enemy's ship, which soon after surrendered. Our broadside was then sprung to bear on the brig, which surrendered in about fifteen minutes after.

The sloop that was opposed to the *Eagle* had struck some time before and drifted down the line, the sloop which was with their galleys having struck also. Three of their galleys are said to be sunk; the others pulled off. Our galleys were about obeying with alacrity the signal to follow them when all the vessels were reported to me to be in a sinking state. It then became necessary to annul the signal to the galleys and order their men to the pumps. I could only look at the enemy's galleys going off in a shattered condition, for there was not a mast in either squadron that could stand to make sail on; the

lower rigging, being nearly all shot away, hung down as though it had been just placed over the mast heads.

The *Saratoga* had fifty-five round shot in her hull; the *Confiance* one hundred and five. The enemy's shot passed principally just over our heads, as there were not 20 whole hammocks in the nettings at the close of the action which lasted, without intermission, two hours and twenty minutes.

The absence and sickness of Lt. Raymond Perry left me without the services of that excellent officer. Much ought fairly to be attributed to him for his great care and attention in disciplining the ship's crew as her first lieutenant. His place was filled by a gallant young officer, Lt. Peter Gamble, who, I regret to inform you, was killed early in the action. Acting Lt. Vallette worked the 1st and 2nd divisions of guns with able effect. Sailing Master Brum's attention to the springs and in the execution of the order to wind the ship and occasionally at the guns meets with my entire approbation; also Capt. Youngs, commanding the acting marines, who took his men to the guns. Mr. Beale, purser, was of great service at the guns and in carrying my orders throughout the ship, with Midshipman Montgomery. Master's Mate Joshua Justin had command of the 3d division. His conduct during the action was that of a brave and correct officer. Midshipmen Monteath, Graham, Williamson, Platt, Thwing, and acting Midshipman Baldwin, all behaved well and gave evidence of their making valuable officers.

The *Saratoga* was twice set on fire by hot shot from the enemy's ship.*

I close, sir, this communication with feelings of gratitude for the able support I received from every officer and man attached to the squadron which I have the honor to command.

I have the honor to be with great respect, sir, yr mot ob st.

T. MACDONOUGH.

HONBLE WM. JONES,
Secretary of the Navy.

* In the original draft of the report this paragraph is in the Commodore's own hand writing. — AUTHOR.

P.S. Accompanying this is a list of killed and wounded, a list of prisoners, and a precise statement of both forces engaged. Also letters from Capt. Henley and Lieut. Comm't. Cassin.

T. MACDONOUGH.

U. S. SHIP SARATOGA,

Sept. 13, 1814.

Sir; I have the honor to enclose you a list of the killed and wounded on board the different vessels of the squadron under your command in the action of the 11th instant.

It is impossible to ascertain correctly the loss of the enemy. From the best information received from the British officers, from my own observations, and from various lists found on board the *Confiance*, I calculate the number of men on board of that ship at the commencement of the action at 270, of whom 180, at least, were killed and wounded; and on board the other captured vessels at least 80 more, making in the whole, killed or wounded, 260. This is doubtless short of the real number as many were thrown overboard from the *Confiance* during the engagement.

The muster books must have been thrown overboard, or otherwise disposed of, as they are not to be found.

I am, sir, very respectfully, your ob. servant,

GEO. BEALE, JR., purser.

THOMAS MACDONOUGH, Esq.,

Com. U. S. Squadron on Lake Champlain.

Return of killed and wounded on board the United States squadron on Lake Champlain in the engagement with the British fleet on the 11th of September, 1814.

SHIP SARATOGA

KILLED

Peter Gamble	lieutenant
Thomas Butler	quarter gunner
James Norberry	boatswain's mate
Abraham Davis	quartermaster
William Wyer	sailmaker

William Brickel	seaman
Peter Johnson	seaman
John Coleman	seaman
Benjamin Burrill	ordinary seaman
Andrew Parmlee	ordinary seaman
Peter Post	seaman
David Bennett	seaman
Ebenezer Johnson	seaman
Joseph Couch	landsman
Thomas Stephens	seaman
Randall McDonald	ordinary seaman
John White	ordinary seaman
Samuel Smith	seaman
Thomas Malony	ordinary seaman
Andrew Nelson	seaman
John Sellack	seaman
Peter Hanson	seaman
Jacob Laraway	seaman
Edward Moore	seaman
Jerome Williams	ordinary seaman
James Carlisle	marine
John Smart	seaman
Earl Hannemon	seaman

Total 28

WOUNDED

James M. Baldwin	acting midshipman
Joseph Barron	pilot
Robert Gary	quarter gunner
George Cassin	quartermaster
John Hollingsworth	seaman
Thomas Robinson	seaman
Purnall Smith	seaman
John Ottiwell	seaman
John Thompson	ordinary seaman
William Tabee	ordinary seaman
William Williams	ordinary seaman
John Roberson	seaman

John Towns	landsman
John Shays	seaman
John S. Hammond	seaman
James Barlow	seaman
James Nagle	ordinary seaman
John Lanman	seaman
Peter Colberg	seaman
William Newton	ordinary seaman
Neil J. Heidmont	seaman
James Steward	seaman
John Adams	landsman
Charles Ratche	seaman
Benjamin Jackson	marine
Jesse Vanhorn	marine
Joseph Ketter	marine
Samuel Pearson	marine

Total 29*

BRIG EAGLE

KILLED

Peter Vandermere	master's mate
John Ribero	seaman
Jacob Lindman	seaman
Perkins Moore	ordinary seaman
James Winship	ordinary seaman
Thomas Anwright	ordinary seaman
Nace Wilson	ordinary seaman
Thomas Lewis	boy
John Wallace	marine
Joseph Heaton	marine
Robert Stratton	marine
James M. Hale	musician
John Wood	musician

Total 13

WOUNDED

Joseph Smith	lieutenant
William A. Spencer	acting lieutenant

* In the original, either a name is omitted or the total is wrong. — AUTHOR.

Francis Breese	master's mate
Abraham Walters	pilot
William C. Allen	quartermaster
James Dervick	quarter gunner
Andrew McEwen	seaman
Zebediah Concklin	seaman
Joseph Valentine	seaman
John Hartley	seaman
John Micklan	seaman
Robert Buckley	seaman
Aaron Fitzgerald	boy
Purnall Boice	ordinary seaman
John N. Craig	seaman
John McKenny	seaman
Matthew Sriver	marine
George Mainwaring	marine
Henry Jones	marine
John McCarty	marine
Total 20	

SCHOONER TICONDEROGA

KILLED

John Stansbury	lieutenant
John Fisher	boatswain's mate
John Atkinson	boatswain's mate
Henry Johnson	seaman
Deodrick Think	marine
John Sharp	marine
Total 6	

WOUNDED

Patrick Cassin	seaman
Ezekiel Goud	seaman
Samuel Sawyer	seaman
William Le Count	seaman
Henry Collin	seaman
John Condon	marine
Total 6	

SLOOP PREBLE

KILLED

Rogers Carter	acting sailing master
Joseph Rowe	boatswain's mate

WOUNDED

None

GUNBOAT BORER

KILLED

Arthur W. Smith	purser's steward
Thomas Gill	boy
James Day	marine

WOUNDED

Ebenezer Cobb	corporal of marines
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GUNBOAT CENTIPEDE

WOUNDED

James Taylor	landsman
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GUNBOAT WILMER

WOUNDED

Peter Frank	seaman
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RECAPITULATION

	Killed	Wounded
Saratoga	28	29
Eagle	13	20
Ticonderoga	6	6
Preble	2	
Borer	3	1
Centipede		1
Wilmer		1
	—	—
	52	58

Gunboats

Nettle
Allen
Viper
Burrows
Ludlow
Alwyn
Ballard

} none killed or wounded

GEORGE BEALE, JR., purser.

Approved:

T. MACDONOUGH.

List of prisoners captured on 11th September and sent to Greenbush.

OFFICERS

Daniel Pring *	captain
Hicks	lieutenant
Creswick	lieutenant
Robertson	lieutenant
McGhie	lieutenant
Drew	lieutenant
Hornsby	lieutenant
Childs	lieutenant marines
Fitzpatrick	lieutenant 39th regiment
Bryden	sailing master
Clark	master's mate
Simmonds	master's mate
Todd	surgeon
Giles	purser
Guy	captain's clerk
Dowell	midshipman
Aire	midshipman
Bondell	midshipman
Toorke	midshipman
Kewstra	midshipman

* On parole.

Davidson	boatswain
Elvin	gunner
Mickel	gunner
Cox	carpenter
Parker	purser
Martin	surgeon
McCabe	assistant surgeon

340 seamen

47 wounded men paroled

Statement of the American force engaged on the 11th September, 1814.

Saratoga	8 long 24-pounders	
	6 42-pound carronades	
	12 32-pound carronades	Guns 26
Eagle	12 32-pound carronades	
	8 long 18-pounders	20
Ticonderoga	8 long 12-pounders	
	4 long 18-pounders	
	5 32-pound carronades	17
Preble	7 long 9-pounders	7

TEN GALLEYS, VIZ.:

Allen	1 long 24-pr & 1 18-pound columbiad	2
Burrows	1 long 24-pr & 1 18-pound columbiad	2
Borer	1 long 24-pr & 1 18-pound columbiad	2
Nettle	1 long 24-pr & 1 18-pound columbiad	2
Viper	1 long 24-pr & 1 18-pound columbiad	2
Centipede	1 long 24-pr & 1 18-pound columbiad	2
Ludlow	1 long 12-pounder	1
Wilmer	1 long 12-pounder	1
Alwyn	1 long 12-pounder	1
Ballard	1 long 12-pounder	1

Guns 86

RECAPITULATION

14 long 24-pounders	
6 42-pound carronades	
29 32-pound carronades	
12 long 18-pounders	
12 long 12-pounders	
7 long 9-pounders	
6 18-pound columbiads	
Total	86 guns
	T. MACDONOUGH.

Statement of the enemy's force engaged on the 11th September, 1814.

Frigate Confiance	27 long 24-pounders	
	4 32-pound carronades	
	6 24-pound carronades	
	2 long 18's on berth deck	Guns 39
Brig Linnet	16 long 12-pounders	16
Sloop Chub *	10 18-pound carronades	
	1 long 6-pounder	11
Finch *	6 18-pound carronades	
	1 18-pound columbiad	
	4 long 6-pounders	11

THIRTEEN GALLEYS, VIZ.,

Sir James Yeo	1 long 24-pr & 1 32-pd carronade	2
Sir George Prevost	1 long 24-pr & 1 32-pd carronade	2
Sir Sidney Beckwith	1 long 24-pr & 1 32-pd carronade	2
Broke	1 long 18-pr & 1 32-pd carronade	2
Murray	1 long 18-pr & 1 18-pd carronade	2
Wellington	1 long 18-pounder	1
Tecumseh	1 long 18-pounder	1
Name unknown	1 long 18-pounder	1
Drummond	1 32-pound carronade	1
Simcoe	1 32-pound carronade	1

* These sloops were formerly the United States Growler and Eagle.

Unknown	1	32-pound carronade	1
Unknown	1	32-pound carronade	1
Unknown	1	32-pound carronade	1

Total * 95

RECAPITULATION

30 long 24-pounders
 7 long 18-pounders
 16 long 12-pounders
 5 long 6-pounders
 13 32-pound carronades
 6 24-pound carronades
 17 18-pound carronades
 1 18-pound columbiad

Total 95 guns

T. MACDONOUGH.

U. STATES BRIG EAGLE,
 PLATTSBURG, September 12th, 1814.

Sir; I am happy to inform you that all my officers and men acted bravely and did their duty in the battle of yesterday with the enemy.

I shall have the pleasure of making a more particular representation of the respective merits of my gallant officers to the Honorable the Sec'y of the Navy.

I have the honor to be respectfully, sir, yr mo obt st;

RO: HENLEY.

P.S. We had thirty-nine round shot in our hull (mostly 24-pounders), four in our lower masts, and we were well peppered with grape. I enclose my boatswain's report.

* The two long 18-pounders found on the *Confiance* were unmounted and should not be properly included in her armament. Deducting these two guns and one gun for the extra gunboat we have ninety-two guns as the correct British total.
 — AUTHOR.

U. S. SCHOONER TICONDEROGA,
PLATTSBURG BAY, Sept. 12th, 1814.

Sir; It is with pleasure I state that every officer and man under my command did their duty yesterday.

Yours resp'y,

STEPHEN CASSIN,

COM. THOS. MACDONOUGH.

Lieut. Comdt.

UNITED STATES SHIP SARATOGA,
SEPTEMBER 15, 1814, off Plattsburg.

Sir; As Providence has given into my command the squadron on Lake Champlain of which you were (after the fall of Captain Downie) the commanding officer, I beg you will, after the able conflict you sustained and evidence of determined valor you evinced on board his Britannic Majesty's brig Linnet, until the necessity of her surrender, accept of your enclosed parole not to serve against the United States or their dependencies until regularly exchanged.

I am, &c. &c.

T. MACDONOUGH

To CAPTAIN PRING, Royal Navy.

C

Other documents relating to the battle on Lake Champlain September 11, 1814.

MASTER COMMANDANT HENLEY TO SECRETARY OF
THE NAVY *

U. S. BRIG EAGLE OFF PLATTSBURG,
September 16, 1814.

Sir; I beg leave to acquaint you with a few particulars of the action of the 11th instant as they particularly respect the vessel which I have the honor to command and they may not appear in the official report of Captain Macdonough, whose duty it is to give a general and impartial representation of the action.

ALB

* Copy of the original.

We were anchored in the harbor of Plattsburg in a line north and south, at about the distance of one hundred yards, the Eagle north, the Saratoga in the centre, and the Ticonderoga south. The enemy approached in a line abreast, having a favourable wind that enabled them to choose their position. The enemy's brig took a station off the starboard bow of the Eagle at about one mile distance, the ship about one point abaft our beam, and the sloop Linnet *, of 11 guns, made an effort to obtain a raking position under our stern. Perceiving her intentions, however, I ordered a broadside to be fired into her, which caused her to strike her colors.

As soon as the enemy approached within point blank distance, this brig commenced a most destructive fire upon their ship and continued to direct her whole broadside, excluding the 18 pounders forward, which were occasionally fired at the brig, who relieved her position as occasion required and kept up a raking and most destructive fire upon this vessel.

I was confident that it was of the greatest importance to endeavor first to carry the enemy's ship to insure us of success. For a great length of time after the action commenced the enemy's ship leveled her whole force upon the Eagle, dealing out destruction.

After having sustained the severest of the action for the space of one hour, having my springs shot away and many of the starboard guns disabled, it was out of my power to bring a gun to bear upon the ship or brig. Consequently I ordered the cable cut and cast the brig, taking an advantageous position a little south of the Saratoga, bringing my larboard broadside to bear upon the ship, which was very shortly obligated to haul down her colours. Our fire was then directed to the brig, and in the space of eight minutes she struck and the victory terminated in our favor. We then turned our attention to the galleys, some of which, it is believed, sunk, and the remainder made their escape. The Eagle was in too shattered a condition to pursue them.

I enclose the surgeon's report of the killed and wounded, by which you will perceive that I had thirteen killed and

* Meaning, of course, the Chub. — AUTHOR.

twenty-seven wounded, most of them severely. I have also the honor to enclose a copy of a report which I made to Captain Macdonough, for your information, of the meritorious conduct of my officers and crew which he has since informed me had been lost.

I have the honor to be, sir, with high respect, your obed. ser.

Ro: HENLEY.

HON. WILLIAM JONES,
Sec. of the Navy.

MASTER COMMANDANT HENLEY TO MACDONOUGH *

[Copy of the report referred to]

U. S. BRIG EAGLE, OFF PLATTSBURG,
Sep. 12th, 1814.

Sir; I have the honor to enclose a report of the killed and wounded on board of the brig Eagle under my command, in the action of yesterday. And while performing this painful part of my duty, sir, permit me to profit by the occasion in performing a more gratifying task to you, for the information of the Hon. Secretary of the Navy, the brave and good conduct of my officers and crew, all of whom, I am proud to say, did their duty. They all performed the part of real Americans. During the severest shock of the action they continued undaunted and unshaken. Nothing could surpass their coolness and deliberate firmness with which every officer and man performed his respective part.

Early in the action I was deprived of services of that excellent officer Lieut. Joseph Smith, who was wounded and carried below but returned to his duty before the action closed. He went into action in that cool and deliberate manner which marks the truly brave man.

The gallant acting Lieut. Wm. A. Spencer shortly after received a severe wound in the head and was also carried below, but before the action ceased he resumed his station.

Acting Sailing Master Daniel Record was slightly wounded

* From Henley's copy in the Navy Department files.

but did not leave the deck. Acting Lieut. Jarvis Loomis, Midshipmen Chamberlain, Machesney and Tardy behaved with great spirit. In short, sir, every officer and man acted bravely and much to my satisfaction.

The zealous and able attention of acting Surgeon Israel Stoddard to the unfortunate officers and men that were wounded entitles him to my warmest thanks, and I should be much gratified to see him rewarded by an appointment as surgeon in the navy.

Mr. Augustus Loomis, a volunteer, was very active and useful, and through you I beg leave to recommend him to the consideration of the Hon. Secretary for a lieutenantcy of marines, and earnestly request that acting Lieuts. Spencer and Loomis may be confirmed in their appointments.

Mr. Record, who I appointed acting sailing master at Vergennes, has proved himself a good and faithful officer, and if it should please the Hon. Secretary to confirm his appointment I should be much gratified. Also Messrs. Edward Smith as gunner, Charles Johnson as carpenter, and John Wilson as boatswain. They behaved well and are worthy of warrants in the navy.

Respectfully your obed. ser.

RO: HENLEY.

LIEUTENANT BUDD TO MACDONOUGH

U. S. SLOOP PREBLE OFF PLATTSBURG,
13th Sepr. 1814

Sir; I have the honor to express to you the satisfaction which the officers and men of the U. S. Sloop Preble under my command afforded me in the late action of the 11th inst. When the enemy's fleet were standing in for the purpose of laying their larger vessels alongside of those of ours, the sloop Finch of 11 guns with several galleys outside of her made for my sloop with her peak down and tack triced up. When within shot the fire was opened on her from the Preble with coolness and deliberation, the galleys having taken in their sails and lying at long gun shot. The Finch continued edging down on my starboard quarter with an intention of getting

a raking position which I prevented with my spring, which proving too short in consequence of the wind having shifted 2 or 3 points more to the Eastwd, was obliged to let it go entirely and keep her broadside to bear with 2 sweeps out of her stern ports. About this time my boatswain Joseph Rose was killed on the forecastle. I could now perceive confusion on board the Finch, when wishing to avoid the incessant and well directed fire of the Preble she endeavored to go about but failed, which gave me a chance, and I did not miss it, of raking her. At this instant 4 galleys were coming down on my weather bow within grape distance with a visible intention of boarding me and which the officers commanding those galleys have since assured me when I was down to the lines with the flag of truce was actually their intention and that "*in five minutes they would have been along side of me*", which is the fact, to prevent which, as *each* galley had more men than my whole crew, I thought it best, with the concurrence of all my officers, to get under way, more especially as my having been obliged to slip one of my cables when the Saratoga drifted on board of me in consequence of the sudden shift of the wind from south to north the preceding evening which occasioned me to be so far to leeward that no assistance could be afforded me from any of the rest of the squadron. I accordingly cut my cable and wore round under my jib toward the Finch, who at the same time wore from me and stood out of the bay. In the act of wearing I manned my larboard broadside and gave the galleys its contents of grape, which, from their short distance from me, must have had good effect. At this time Sailing Master Rogers Carter was severely wounded with a grape shot from one of them, of which he has since died. I then got my mainsail on her and brought her by the wind, the galleys pursuing me closely and firing immense quantities of grape, which fortunately being directed too high did no other damage than cut my sails very much. I made one stretch in shore, then stood off. In the mean time the galleys had left me to assist the Finch, who I afterwards understood was aground. Whether she was got there accidentally or purposely I will not pretend to assert. After the ship Confiance had struck and

the galleys left the vicinity of the Finch, who had her colours still flying, I prepared for lying alongside of her and bore up for that purpose, which she, perceiving, struck her flag. I still stood down for her and discovered she was ashore. She has 4 nine pound shot below the surface of the water which impresses me very forcibly with the opinion that she was in a sinking condition when she grounded. The Preble I have the pleasure to state is not materially injured. She has got 2 eighteen pound shot through her hull about a foot from the water; her larboard wales considerably started; 1 eighteen pound shot lodged in her stern, having carried away the head knees and shattered the stern; one 24 lb shot through her quarter bulwarks & the dents of two 18 lb shot from the Finch's columbiads.

I have the honor to be, sir, your mo obt st

CHAS. A. BUDD.

COMMODORE T. MACDONOUGH.

MACDONOUGH TO BRIGADIER GENERAL MACOMB

U. S. SHIP SARATOGA, OFF PLATTSBURG,
September 13, 1814.

Dear Sir; Enclosed is a copy of a letter from Capt. White Youngs and a list of killed and wounded attached to his command.

I beg leave to recommend Capt. Youngs to your particular notice. During the action his conduct was such as to meet with my warmest approbation. I feel much indebted to him for his personal valor and example of coolness and intrepidity to his own men as well as to the sailors. He volunteered in a sinking boat to carry my order to the galleys for close action in the hottest part of it and supplied the guns with his men as fast as the sailors were disabled.

I am with much respect and esteem, your obedient servant,

T. MACDONOUGH.

BRIG. GEN. MACOMB, OF U. S. ARMY.

CAPTAIN YOUNGS TO MACDONOUGH

[Copy of letter referred to]

U. S. SHIP SARATOGA, LAKE CHAMPLAIN,
September 12, 1814.

Sir; I have the honor of enclosing to you a list of killed and wounded troops of the line (acting marines on board the squadron, Lake Champlain) in the action of the 11th instant.

In attempting to do justice to the brave officers and men I have the honor to command, my feeble abilities fall far short of my wishes. First Lieut. Morrison, 33rd infantry, stationed on board the U. S. brig Eagle, was wounded but remained on deck during the action, animating his men by his honorable conduct. Second Lieut. James Young, 6th infantry, on board the U. S. schooner Ticonderoga, merits my warmest thanks. I would particularly recommend him to your notice. Second Lieut. William B. Howell, 15th infantry, in the U. S. ship Saratoga, rendered me every assistance. Notwithstanding his having been confined for ten days of a fever, yet, at the commencement of the action, he was found on deck and continued until the enemy had struck, when he was borne to his bed. I would also recommend him to your notice.

The conduct of the non-commissioned officers and privates was so highly honorable to their country and themselves it would be superfluous to particularize them.

I have the honor to be, sir, your obedient servant,

WHITE YOUNGS,
Capt. 15th Inf. com'ing detach.
of acting marines.

COM. T. MACDONOUGH.

D

The Burlington (Vt.) Centinel of September 16, 1814, says: "The following account of the force and loss on board the British and American fleets was received by a gentleman in this place directly from Com. Macdonough and put on paper on the spot and may be relied

on as correct so far as his indefatigable attention to the wounded and the burial of the dead and the fidelity of the British officers have enabled him to ascertain the facts."

BRITISH				
	Guns	Men	Killed	Wounded
Large ship	37	300	50	60
Brig	16	120	20	30
Sloop	11	40	6	10
Sloop	11	40	8	10
11 gunboats	16	550	Two probably sunk	
	—	—	—	—
	91	1,050	84	110

AMERICAN				
	Guns	Men	Killed	Wounded
Saratoga	26	210	26	30
Eagle	20	120	13	27
Ticonderoga	17	110	6	6
Preble	7	30	1	1
10 gunboats	16	350	3	3
	—	—	—	—
	86	820	49	67

E

SIR JAMES LUCAS YEO TO J. W. CROKER

"Copy of a letter from Com. Sir J. L. Yeo, commander-in-chief of his Majesty's ships and vessels on the lakes of Canada, to J. W. Croker, Esq., dated on board his Majesty's ship St. Lawrence, at Kingston, 24th Sept."

Sir; I have the honor to transmit, for the information of the lords commissioners of the admiralty, a copy of a letter from Captain Pring, late commander of his Majesty's brig Linnet. It appears to me, and I have good reason to believe,

that Capt. Downie was urged, and his ship hurried into action before she was in a fit state to meet the enemy. I am also of opinion that there was not the least necessity for our squadron giving the enemy such decided advantages by going into their bay to engage them; even had they been successful, it would not in the least have assisted the troops in storming the batteries — whereas, had our troops taken their batteries first, it would have obliged the enemy's squadron to quit the bay and given our's a fair chance.

I have the honor, &c.

JAMES LUCAS YEO,
Commodore and Commander-in-chief.

CAPTAIN PRING TO SIR JAMES LUCAS YEO

[Copy of letter referred to]

U. STATES SHIP SARATOGA, PLATTSBURG BAY,
LAKE CHAMPLAIN, Sept. 12, 1814.

Sir; The painful task of making you acquainted with the circumstances attending the capture of his Majesty's squadron, yesterday, by that of the American, under Commodore Macdonough, it grieves me to state, becomes my duty to perform, from the ever-to-be-lamented loss of that worthy and gallant officer, Capt. Downie, who unfortunately fell early in the action.

In consequence of the earnest solicitation of his Excellency Sir George Prevost for the co-operation of the naval force on this lake to attack that of the enemy, who were placed for the support of their works at Plattsburg, which he proposed should be stormed by the troops at the same moment the naval action should commence in the bay, every possible exertion was used to accelerate the armament of the new ship that the military movements might not be postponed at such an advanced season of the year longer than was absolutely necessary. On the 3d inst. I was directed to proceed in command of the flotilla of gunboats to protect the left flank of our army advancing towards Plattsburg; and on the following day, after taking possession and parolling the militia of Isle La

Motte, I caused a battery of 3 long 18 pounder guns to be constructed for the support of our position abreast of Little Chazy, where the supplies for the army were ordered to be landed.

The fleet came up on the 3d inst. but for want of stores for the equipment of the guns, could not move forward until the 11th. At daylight we weighed, and at 7 were in full view of the enemy's fleet, consisting of a ship, brig, schooner, and 1 sloop, moored in line abreast of their encampment, with a division of 5 gunboats on each flank. At 40 minutes past 7, after the officers commanding vessels and the flotilla had received their final instructions as to the plan of attack, we made sail in order of battle. Capt. Downie had determined on laying his ship athwart-hawse of the enemy's, directing Lieut. McGhie, of the Chub, to support me in the Linnet in engaging the brig to the right, and Lt. Hicks, of the Finch, with the flotilla of gunboats, to attack the schooner and sloop on the left of the enemy's line.

At 8 the enemy's gunboats and smaller vessels commenced a heavy and galling fire on our line. At 10 minutes after 8 the *Confiance*, having 2 anchors shot away from her larboard bow, and the wind baffling, was obliged to anchor (though not in the situation proposed) within two cables length of her adversary. The Linnet and Chub soon afterwards took their allotted stations, something short of that distance, when the crews on both sides cheered and commenced a spirited and close action. A short time, however, deprived me of the valuable services of Lt. McGhie, who, from having his cables, bowsprit and mainboom shot away, drifted within the enemy's line and was obliged to surrender.

From the light airs and smoothness of the water, the fire on each side proved very destructive from the commencement of the engagement, and, with the exception of the brig, that of the enemy appeared united against the *Confiance*. After two hours severe conflict with our opponent she cut her cable, run down and took shelter between the ship and schooner, which enabled us to direct our fire against the division of the enemy's gunboats and ship, which had so long annoyed us during our close engagement with the brig without any return on our

part. At this time the fire of the enemy's ship slackened considerably, having several of her guns dismounted, when she cut her cable and winded her larboard broadside to bear on the *Confiance*, who, in vain, endeavored to effect the same operation. At 33 minutes after 10 I was much distressed to observe that the *Confiance* struck her colors. The whole attention of the enemy's force then became directed towards the *Linnet*. The shattered and disabled state of the masts, sails, rigging and yards precluded the most distant hope of being able to effect an escape by cutting the cable. The result of doing so must in a few minutes have been her drifting along side the enemy's vessels, close under our lee; but in the hope the flotilla of gunboats, who had abandoned the object assigned them, would perceive our wants and come to our assistance, which would afford a reasonable prospect of being towed clear, I determined to resist the then destructive cannonading of the whole of the enemy's fleet, and at the same time despatched Lt. H. Drew to ascertain the state of the *Confiance*. At 45 minutes after 10 I was apprised of the irreparable loss she had sustained by the death of her brave commander (whose merits it would be presumptuous in me to extol) as well as the great slaughter which had taken place on board, and observing from the manœuvres of the flotilla that I could enjoy no further expectations of relief, the situation of my gallant comrades, who had so nobly fought and even now fast falling by my side, demanded the surrender of his Majesty's brig entrusted to my command to prevent a useless waste of valuable lives, and, at the request of the surviving officers and men, I gave the painful orders for the colors to be struck.

Lieut. Hicks, of the *Finch*, had the mortification to strike on a reef of rocks to the eastward of Crab Island about the middle of the engagement, which prevented his rendering that assistance to the squadron that might, from an officer of such ability, have been expected.

The misfortune which this day befell us by capture will, sir, I trust, apologize for the lengthy detail which, in justice to the sufferers, I have deemed necessary to give of the particulars which led to it; and when it is taken into consideration that

the *Confiance* was 16 days before on the stocks, with an unorganized crew composed of several drafts of men who had recently arrived from different ships at Quebec, many of whom only joined the day before and were totally unknown either to the officers or to each other, with the want of gunlocks as well as other necessary appointments not to be procured in this country, I trust you will feel satisfied of the decided advantage the enemy possessed, exclusive of their great superiority in point of force, a comparative statement of which I have the honor to annex. It now becomes the most pleasing part of my duty to notice to you the determined skill and bravery of the officers and men in this unequal contest; but it grieves me to state that the loss sustained in maintaining it has been so great; that of the enemy, I understand, amounts to something more than the same number.

The fine style in which Capt. Downie conducted the squadron into action, amidst a tremendous fire, without returning a shot until secured, reflects the greatest credit to his memory for his judgment and coolness, as also on Lieuts. McGhie and Hicks for so strictly attending to his example and instructions. Their own accounts of the capture of their respective vessels, as well as that of Lt. Robertson, who succeeded to the command of the *Confiance*, will, I feel assured, do ample justice to the merits of the officers and men serving under their immediate command; but I cannot omit noticing the individual conduct of Lieuts. Robertson, Creswick and Hornby, and Mr. Bryden, master, for their particular exertion in endeavoring to bring the *Confiance's* larboard side to bear on the enemy after most of their guns were dismounted on the other.

It is impossible for me to express to you my admiration of the officers and crew serving under my personal orders. Their coolness and steadiness, the effect of which was proved by their irresistible fire directed towards the brig opposed to us, claims my warmest acknowledgments, but more particularly for preserving the same so long after the whole strength of the enemy had been directed against the *Linnet* alone. My first lieutenant, Mr. William Drew, whose merits I have before had the honor to report to you, behaved on this occasion in the most exemplary manner.

By the death of Mr. Paul, acting second lieutenant, the service has been deprived of a most valuable and brave officer; he fell early in the action. Great credit is due to Mr. Giles, purser, for volunteering his services on deck; to Mr. Mitchell, surgeon, for the skill he evinced in performing some amputations required at the moment, as well as his great attention to the wounded during the action, at the close of which the water was nearly a foot above the lower deck from the number of shot which struck her between wind and water. I have to regret the loss of the boatswain, Mr. Jackson, who was killed a few minutes before the action terminated. The assistance I received from Mr. Mickel, the gunner, and also from Mr. Clark, master's mate, Messrs. Toorke and Sinclair, midshipmen, the latter of whom was wounded in the head, and Mr. Guy, my clerk, will, I hope, recommend them, as well as the whole of my gallant little crew, to your notice. I have much satisfaction in making you acquainted with the humane treatment the wounded have received from Commodore Macdonough. They were immediately removed to his own hospital on Crab Island and were furnished with every requisite. His generous and polite attention also, to myself, officers and men, will ever hereafter be gratefully remembered.

I have, &c.

DAN. PRING.

F

On August 28, 1815, a court martial was held on board the *Gladiator* at Portsmouth, England, in connection with the defeat of the British squadron on Lake Champlain September 11, 1814, and the following verdict was pronounced:

The court having maturely weighed the evidence is of the opinion that the capture of H. M. S. *Confiance* and the remainder of the squadron by the American squadron was principally caused by the British squadron having been urged into battle previous to its being in a proper state to meet the

enemy, by the promised co-operation of the land forces not being carried into effect, and by the pressing letters of their commander-in-chief, whereby it appears that he had on the 10th of September, 1814, only waited for the naval attack to storm the enemy's works. That the signal of the approach on the following day was made by the scaling of the guns as settled between Captain Downie and Major Coote, and the promised co-operation was communicated to the other officers and crews of the British squadron before the commencement of the action.

The court, however, is of opinion that the attack would have been attended with more effect if a part of the gunboats had not withdrawn themselves from the action and others of the vessels had not been prevented by baffling winds from getting into the stations assigned them. That Captain Pring of the *Linnet*, and Lieutenant Robertson, who succeeded to the command of the *Confiance* after the lamented fate of Captain Downie (whose conduct was marked by the greatest valour), and Lieutenant Christopher James Bell, commanding the *Murray*, and Mr. James Robertson, commanding the *Beresford*, gunboats, who appeared to take their trial at this court martial, conducted themselves with great zeal, bravery and ability during the action; that Lieutenant William Hicks, commanding the *Finch*, also conducted himself with becoming bravery; that the other surviving officers and ship's crew, except Lieutenant McGhie of the *Chub* who has not appeared here to take his trial, also conducted themselves with bravery; and that Captain Pring, Lieutenant Robertson, Lieutenant Hicks, Lieutenant Bell, and Mr. James Robertson, and the rest of the surviving officers and ship's company, except Lieutenant McGhie, ought to be most honourably acquitted, and they are hereby most honourably acquitted accordingly.

On September 18, 1815, Lieutenant McGhie was tried and the verdict was: "The court, having heard the circumstances, determines that the *Chub* was not

properly carried into action nor anchored so as to do the most effectual service; by which neglect she drifted into the line of the enemy. That it did not appear, however, that there was any want of courage in Lieutenant McGhie and therefore the court does only adjudge him to be severely reprimanded."

G

Charges preferred by Sir James Lucas Yeo against Sir George Prevost.

1. For having, on or about the 11th of September, 1814, by holding out the expectation of a co-operation of the army under his command, induced Captain Downie, late of his Majesty's ship *Confiance*, to attack the American squadron on Lake Champlain when it was highly imprudent to make such attack without the co-operation of the land forces, and for not having afforded that co-operation.

2. For not having stormed the American works on shore at nearly the same time that the said naval action commenced, as he had given Captain Downie reason to expect.

3. For having disregarded the signal for co-operation which had been previously agreed upon.

4. For not having attacked the enemy on shore either during the said naval action or after it was ended, whereby his Majesty's naval squadron under the command of Captain Downie might have been saved.

H

MIDSHIPMAN LEA TO HIS BROTHER

GENERAL HOSPITAL, ISLE AUX NOIX, Sept. 21.

Dear Brother; While we lay at Brandy Pots, hearing that Captain Downie had a command on Lake Ontario, I volunteered my services for that place, and I embarked on board a brig, together with 48 seamen and 14 marines, with orders to proceed and join the fleet with all possible despatch. We

went to Montreal in the brig, and from that place I took open boats for the remainder of our passage, which was nine days. The passage from Montreal upwards was awfully grand. The immense cataracts or rapids of water, which we had to haul the open boats through, at once strike terror in the mind of every person who had never before witnessed it, but we arrived safe, when I made myself known to Captain Downie, who was very glad to see me and took me into his own ship, the *Montreal*. I remained here about seven days, when Captain Downie received an order to go down to Lake Champlain and there take command of the fleet, on which he and myself proceeded to the place, where he hoisted his broad pendant, as commander of the lake, on board the *Confiance*, which was not complete when we got here. Captain Downie gave me command of his Majesty's cutter *Iceberg*, which I held until we had completed the ship, when I joined her, and we immediately sailed in quest of the Yankee fleet, which on Sunday, the 11th of September, we descried lying off Plattsburg, with springs on their cables and all in line of battle, ready to receive us. At nine, A.M. (just after breakfast) we beat to quarters; at half past 9 made signal to our fleet to form the line of battle; at 40 minutes after 9 run down alongside the Yankee commodore's ship and came to anchor, when the action commenced by a vigorous cannonade of all the Yankee fleet on our ship, which we immediately returned. A little before 10 o'clock the action was general, and kept up with the greatest spirit until 25 minutes after noon, when our spring and rudder being shot away, all our masts, yards and sails so shattered that one looked like so many bunches of matches, and the other like a bundle of old rags. The captain was killed about ten minutes after the action commenced, and not above five men but what were killed or wounded, and her hull like a riddle. As she was foundering very fast, we were necessitated, though with the greatest reluctance, to strike to the enemy. About 15 minutes before we struck, I received a wound from a grape shot, which, after striking my foot, passed through the palm of my left hand. My fingers are very much shattered. The enemy immediately took possession of us and we were

sent on shore to the hospital, where we lay two days, when we were sent down here on our parole. The havoc on both sides is dreadful. I don't think there are more than five of our men out of 300 but what are killed or wounded. Never was a shower of hail so thick as the shot whistling about our ears. Were you to see my jacket, waistcoat, trousers and hat, you would be astonished how I escaped as I did, for they are literally torn all to rags with shot and splinters. The upper part of my hat was also shot away. There is one of our marines who was in the Trafalgar action with Lord Nelson, who says it was a mere flea-bite in comparison with this. At the time we attacked the shipping, our army made an attack on the town, and were in the act of scaling the walls when Sir George Prevost sounded the retreat.

I

ANDREW WILLIAM COCHRAN, ACTING DEPUTY
JUDGE ADVOCATE TO THE BRITISH FORCES, TO
MACDONOUGH

[Duplicate]

QUEBEC, 22nd March, 1815.

Sir; The events at Plattsburg on the 11th September last being about to become the subject of investigation in England and the presence of his Excellency Sir George Prevost being required there, he has left to me, as a professional person, the task of collecting and arranging such evidence as is to be procured in this country and may appear to me to be useful on the occasion.

Using my own discretion, I consider it highly desirable that the position occupied by the squadron under your command on the 11th Sept. should be correctly ascertained, and I therefore take the liberty of addressing you to request that you will do me the favour to furnish me with the respectable and conclusive authority which your answer will give me on the following points:

Whether the vessels under your command were or were not at the time of the engagement, within shot of the works at Plattsburg or of any and which of them;

And also whether, after the action closed, any obstacle existed either from the damage you had sustained or from the direction of the wind to prevent your moving your fleet from the position it did occupy during the action.

You will oblige me much by an early reply to this communication.

I have the honour to be, sir, your most obedt. humble servant,

ANDREW WM. COCHRAN,
Acting Deputy Judge Advocate to the Forces.
COMMODORE MACDONOUGH,
U. S. Navy.

J

MACDONOUGH TO ANDREW WILLIAM COCHRAN

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your duplicate of the 22nd March and in reply thereto inform you that the communication I made to the Honorable Secretary of the Navy dated September 13, 1814, and since published, copy of which I send you, contains all the facts which I considered of any importance relating to the events at Plattsburg referred to in your letter. Delicacy in regard to my own government as well as the manifest impropriety of my becoming a party in the contest between two officers of a nation so situated as Great Britain has been with the United States should ever prevent my entering into further details in writing without the consent of the Secretary of the Navy. While in New York I was drawn into a conversation by Sir James on the events of the battle. To that conversation, therefore, and the enclosed copy, I beg leave to refer you for the information you desire.

K

CADWALLADER R. COLDEN TO MACDONOUGH

NEW YORK, June 26th, 1815.

Dear Sir; On or about the 26th of last month I took the liberty of addressing you a letter at Washington upon a subject

tho', not of importance to myself, may very materially affect the person in whose behalf the information was requested. I at the same time wrote to Major General Macomb a similar letter and have received from him a polite and satisfactory answer. Having since had occasion to visit this city, have had some interesting conversation with the General (with whom I have been long acquainted). I much regret your having left New York a few days previous to my arrival. Annexed I forward a copy of my letter of the 26th ulto. and ask the favor of you to transmit me a reply with as little delay as your convenience will admit of.

Be pleased to address me to the care of Joseph Hanmann, merchant, New York, if your letter has the prospect of reaching this city by the 1st or 2nd of July, after which I shall leave this for my residence, Lansingburgh, county of Rensselaer, New York, by which address letters will find me.

With sentiments of great esteem and regard, I remain, dear sir, your obedt. servt.,

CADR. R. COLDEN.

CADWALLADER R. COLDEN TO MACDONOUGH

[Copy of letter referred to]

LANSINGBURGH, RENSSELAER COUNTY,

N. YORK, May 26th, 1815.

Dear Sir; I take the liberty of asking your opinion as to the distance the American squadron under your command was moored from the forts at Plattsburg during the action between the fleets on the 11th September, 1814. This question involves matter of moment, not as respects yourself or Gen. Macomb, but bears with great interest upon another quarter. I have been urged by a friend to ascertain from you such specific and positive information touching this question of distance as you may condescend to give.

It would be all important to learn that the American squadron were, during the contest, beyond the effectual range of the batteries. I have learned by report that such was the case, you having taken that precautionary step fearing the forts

might change masters. I could wish this letter considered confidential, yet am ready to enter into any further explanation should it be deemed necessary. Your communication will be received by me with much interest, and heartfelt gratitude by those whom it may materially affect and whom I trust it is in your power to serve.

I have the honor to remain your obedt servt

CADR. R. COLDEN.

N. B. The above may differ from the original a few words tho' not in substance; not having the original by me write from a copy of a similar letter to Gen. Macomb and memory. The General is decidedly of opinion that the fleet was beyond the effectual range of his batteries, and being fully apprised of the purpose for which the inquiry is made seems desirous to afford the information wanted.

CADWALLADER R. COLDEN TO MACDONOUGH

LANSINGBURGH, COUNTY OF RENSSELAER,

STATE OF NEW YORK, July 17th, 1815.

Dear Sir; Your polite letter of the 3rd instant has been received, for which permit me to offer you my sincere thanks. It has been forwarded to whom it most materially concerns and will be very acceptable, as a handle, I am led to believe, was intended to be made of this question of distance. General Macomb concurs with you (unless it can be supposed the batteries could have effect at the distance of one mile and a half). I must now ask you to pardon the further liberty I am going to take in requesting you to forward me a duplicate of your letter. Fearing you may not have kept a copy of it, I send you one on the annexed half sheet. Under many obligations I remain,

Respectfully your obedt. servt,

CADR. R. COLDEN.

MACDONOUGH TO CADWALLADER R. COLDEN

[Copy of letter referred to]

PORTSMOUTH, NEW HAMPSHIRE,

July 3rd, 1815.

Dear Sir; Your letter of the 26th ultimo came to hand

yesterday. The letter you addressed to me at Washington has not been received or it assuredly would have been attended to. In reply to yours of the 26th ulto. it is my opinion that our squadron was anchored one mile and a half from the batteries at Plattsburg during the contest between it and the British squadron on the 11th Sept., 1814.

I am with much respect, your obedt servt,

T. MACDONOUGH.

CADR. R. COLDEN, ESQ.,
LANSINGBURGH.

L

Resolution expressive of the sense of Congress of the gallant conduct of Captain Thomas Macdonough, the officers, seamen, marines, and infantry serving as marines, on board the United States squadron on Lake Champlain.

That the thanks of Congress be, and the same are hereby, presented to Captain Thomas Macdonough, and, through him, to the officers, petty officers, seamen, marines, and infantry serving as marines, attached to the squadron under his command, for the decisive and splendid victory gained on Lake Champlain on the eleventh of September, in the year one thousand eight hundred and fourteen, over a British squadron of superior force.

That the President of the United States be requested to cause gold medals to be struck, emblematical of the action between the two squadrons, and to present them to Captain Macdonough and Captain Robert Henley, and also to Lieutenant Stephen Cassin, in such manner as may be most honorable to them; and that the President be further requested to present a silver medal, with suitable emblems and devices, to each of the commissioned officers of the navy and army serving on board, and a sword to each of the midshipmen and sailing masters, who so nobly distinguished themselves in that memorable conflict.

That the President of the United States be requested to present a silver medal, with like emblems and devices, to the nearest male relative of Lieutenant Peter Gamble and of Lieutenant John Stansbury, and to communicate to them the deep regret which Congress feel for the loss of those gallant men whose names ought to live in the recollection and affection of a grateful country.

That three months' pay be allowed, exclusively of the common allowance, to all petty officers, seamen, marines, and infantry serving as marines, who so gloriously supported the honor of the American flag on that memorable day.

OCTOBER 20, 1814.

INDEX

INDEX OF PERSONS

- ABBOT, Midshipman, 150
 Joel, 223, 230
 ADAMS, John, 20, 35, 47, 272
 AIRE, Midshipman, 275
 ALEXANDER, Emperor, 235
 ALGIERS, Dey of, 33, 47, 48
 ALGONQUIN, 106
 ALLEN, William C., 273
 William H., 133
 ANDERSON, Alexander, 186
 James, 12
 Joseph, 12
 Thomas O., 66, 68
 ANGUS, Samuel, 220
 ANWRIGHT, Thomas, 272
 ARBUTHNOT, Captain, 214
 ARMSTRONG, Charles W., 248
 William M., 248
 ARNOLD, Benedict, 107
 Joseph, 248
 ARNOT, Mrs., 212
 ATKINSON, John, 273

 BAINBRIDGE, Joseph, 64, 66, 68, 74,
 76, 132, 213
 William, 23, 48, 50, 58-60, 63,
 93, 101-103, 112, 120, 121,
 194, 229
 BALDWIN, James M., 208, 269, 271
 Russell, 230, 245
 BALLARD, H. C., 236, 237, 243
 Henry E., 90
 BANCROFT, Sailing Master, 162, 173
 BARBARY POWERS, 24, 31, 236
 BARBARY STATES, 47, 49
 BARCLAY, Robert Heriot, 108, 133
 Thomas, 47
 BARLOW, James, 272
 BARNHOUSE, Augustus, 249
 BARRON, James, 50, 51, 94
 Joseph, 271
 Joseph, Jr., 113
 Samuel, 50, 79, 83, 84
 BATHURST, Earl, 166, 199
 BAYNES, Adjutant General, 186
 BEALE, George, Jr., 162, 163, 208,
 269, 270, 275
 Lloyd, 132
 BELL, Charles H., 231
 Christopher James, 292
 BENEDICK, 104

 BENJAMIN, Park, 52
 BENNETT, A. J., 230
 David, 271
 BERESFORD, Captain, 112
 BERNARD, Simon, 30
 BIDDLE, James, 53, 60, 132, 133, 221
 BINNEY, Amos, 120
 BLAINE, Ephraim R., 53
 BLAKE, Joshua, 74, 76
 BLAKELY, Johnston, 132, 214
 BLEEKER, Anthony, 132
 BLODGET, Samuel G., 53
 BLOOMFIELD, Joseph, 26, 205
 BLYTHE, Captain, 133
 BODEN, William, 208
 BOGUE, H. P., 185
 BOICE, Purnall, 273
 BONDELL, Midshipman, 275
 BOURNE, Benjamin F., 237
 BOYCE, Lieutenant, 222
 BOYD, Walter, 64
 BRACE, Jonathan, 227
 BRANDT, Richard B., 53
 BREESE, Francis T., 192, 273
 S. L., 162, 195
 BRICKEL, William, 271
 BRIGGS, T. P., 191, 192, 208
 BRINE, Captain, 214
 BROKE, Captain, 133
 BROOKS, Lieutenant, 102
 BROWN, A., 214
 General, 243
 N., 214
 BROWNE, 136, 138
 BROWNELL, Thomas C., 254, 255
 BRUM, Philip, 208, 269
 BRYDEN, Sailing Master, 275, 290
 BUCK, Major, 224
 BUCKINGHAM, Marquis of, 233
 BUCKLEY, Robert, 192, 273
 BUDD, Charles A., 162, 180, 191, 195,
 202, 204, 207, 208, 218, 219,
 282, 284
 BULLUS, John, 120, 121, 132
 BURRILL, Benjamin, 271
 BURROWS, William, 133
 BUTLER, Thomas, 270

 CALDWELL, James R., 53, 78, 79
 CALHOUN, James E., 249

- CAMPBELL, George W., 31, 229, 230,
233, 234
Hugh George, 51
Mrs., 233
Sir George, 233
CANNON, Joseph L., 208
CARDEN, Captain, 112
CARLISLE, James, 271
CARROLL, Michael B., 53
CARTER, Rogers, 274, 283
CASSIN, George, 271
Patrick, 273
Stephen, 29, 130, 136, 142, 162,
181, 190, 191, 195, 243, 267,
268, 270, 279, 299
CATALANO, Salvatore, 66, 69
CATON, William, Jr., 201
CHAMBERLAIN, Midshipman, 282
Samuel P., 223
CHAMPLAIN, Samuel de, 106
CHASE, George, 258
Philander, 99, 231, 258, 261
Philander, Jr., 231
CHAUNCEY, Isaac, 51, 79, 108, 114,
115, 119, 126, 133, 171, 209,
211, 214, 222, 243, 252, 253
CHILDS, Lieutenant, 275
CHITTENDEN, Governor, 139-141,
210
CHRISTIE, Robert, 119, 151, 170
CINCINNATI, Society of The, 193, 253
CLARK, Master's Mate, 275, 291
Stephen L., 208
Thomas, 75
CLAYTON, Governor, 16
CLINTON, Charles, 132
DeWitt, 132, 209, 215
COBB, Ebenezer, 274
COCHRAN, Andrew William, 173, 295,
296
COLBERG, Peter, 272
COLDEN, Cadwallader R., 173, 174,
296-299
COLEMAN, John, 271
COLLIER, Captain, 213
COLLIN, Henry, 273
CONCKLIN, Zebediah, 273
CONDON, John, 273
CONGRESS, 13-15, 34-36, 40, 42, 43,
45, 58, 67-70, 83, 87, 91, 100,
133, 163, 193, 195, 222, 260, 299,
300
CONOVER, Thomas A., 162, 230, 245
COOPER, J. Fenimore, 87, 163, 166,
168, 174, 195
COOTE, Major, 292
CORMAC, 13
COUCH, James, 271
COWDERY, Jonathan, 60
COX, —, 276
John S. H., 59, 60
COYLE, Jane, 11
CRAIG, John N., 273
Sir James Henry, 119
CRANE, William Montgomery, 78,
105
CRARY, L. G., 208
CREIGHTON, John O., 220
CRESWICK, Lieutenant, 275, 290
CRIPPEN, Thomas, 53
CROKER, J. W., 286
CROSS, James, 230
Joseph, 248
CROWLY, Charles E., 230
CROWNINSHIELD, C. B., 220
B. W., 265
CURTENIUS, Peter, 132
CUTBUSH, Edward, 53
William, 53, 60
DACRES, Captain, 105
DALE, Richard, 45, 50
DALY, Captain, 170, 184
DASHWOOD, Ludlow, 112
DAVIDSON, —, 276
DAVIS, Abraham, 270
Colonel, 29, 142
John, 66, 68
DAWSON, Henry B., 185
DAY, James, 274
DEARBORN, Henry, 109, 111
DECATUR, James, 74, 76
Stephen, 23, 24, 58, 63, 64, 66-
71, 74-80, 112, 133, 221, 222,
231, 236, 243, 267
DELAWARE HISTORICAL SOCIETY, 51
DENNING, William, 112, 217
DENNISON, Washington, 116, 118
DERVICK, James, 192, 273
DICKENSON, Captain, 221
DONCHADA, 11
DONOCH, 13
DORSEY, John S., 79
DOWELL, Midshipman, 275
DOWNES, John, 90
DOWNIE, George, 158, 159, 161, 165,
166, 168, 170, 171, 175-180, 186,
189, 197-199, 263, 279, 287, 288,
290, 292, 293
DOWNING, Samuel W., 248
DOUGLASS, Captain, 221
DREW, H., 289
Lieutenant, 275
William, 290
DREWRY, Lieutenant, 146
DUER, William A., 224-226, 228
DULANY, Bladen, 230
DULLES, Joseph H., 153

- DUNCAN, Silas, 161
 DWIGHT, —, 153

 EATON, William, 49
 EDWARDS, A. H., 248
 ELLERY, Charles, 230
 Frank, 146, 208
 ELLIOTT, Captain, 253
 ELVIN, —, 276
 EMMONS, George F., 87
 ENGLE, Frederick, 230, 231
 EVANS, Samuel, 122, 132, 243
 EVERARD, Thomas, 122, 123, 125

 FALCON, Captain, 221
 FENWICK, J. R., 132
 FERDINAND, King, 31, 236
 FERGUSON, James, 223
 FINCH, Captain, 253
 William B., 90
 FISHER, John, 273
 P., 151, 152
 FITZGERALD, Aaron, 273
 FITZPATRICK, Lieutenant, 275
 FIVE NATIONS, 106
 FRANCIS II, Emperor, 31, 236
 FRANK, Peter, 274
 FREEBORN, John, 118, 162
 FULTON, Robert, 132, 214

 GALES, —, 66, 68-70
 GALLAGHER, John, 237
 GAMBLE, Peter, 179, 185, 195, 269,
 270, 300
 Robert, 60
 William, 189
 GANSEVOORT, G., 248
 GARY, Robert, 272
 GIBBON, James, 53, 60
 GILES, Purser, 275, 291
 GILL, Thomas, 274
 GLENDY, William M., 230
 GLENTWORTH, James B., 249
 GODBY, William, 53
 GOLDSBOROUGH, Charles W., 36
 GOODWIN, Major, 224
 GORDON, Captain, 119
 Lieutenant, 236
 William L., 230
 GORE, Sir John, 62, 63
 GOUD, Ezekiel, 273
 GOULD, Judge, 228
 GRAHAM, Michael, 53, 85, 90
 Midshipman, 195, 269
 GRAVES, Samuel, 117, 118
 GREEN, William, 251
 GRISWOLD, Bishop, 231
 GUNN, William, 186
 GUY, —, 275, 291

 HACKSTAFF, Anna (Garr), 246
 Clara, 246
 William G., 246
 HALL, Edward, 54
 James M., 272
 John, 53, 132
 HALSEY, James M., 231
 HAMILTON, Paul, 95-97, 101
 HAMMOND, John S., 272
 HAMPTON, Wade, 121, 122, 126,
 128-130, 205
 HANMANN, Joseph, 297
 HANNEMON, Earl, 271
 HANSON, Peter, 271
 HARRIS, Robert, Jr., 230
 William F., 231
 HARTLEY, John, 192, 273
 HARVIE, Jacqueline B., 85, 90
 HARWOOD, Allen A., 248
 Nicholas, 60
 HASLET, John, 13, 40
 HAWKINS, Charles E., 230
 HAYES, Captain, 221
 HAZARD, D. V., 162, 208
 HEATON, Joseph, 272
 HEERMAN, Lewis, 64, 66
 HEIDMONT, Neil J., 272
 HEMPHILL, James A., 248
 HENDERSON, Archibald, 223
 HENLEY, John D., 133
 Robert, 30, 162, 177, 181, 191-
 193, 195, 268, 270, 278, 279,
 281, 282, 299
 HENRY, Bernard, 54, 60, 85, 90
 HERRICK, Oliver, 118, 265
 HICKS, William, 166, 184, 275, 288-
 290, 292
 HILYAR, Captain, 213
 HIXON, Samuel C., 231
 HOBAN, Edward, 248
 HOFFMAN, Captain, 253
 HOLLAND, Stephen, 162, 208
 HOLLINGSWORTH, John, 271
 HOPE, Captain, 221
 Lieutenant, 213
 HORNBY, Lieutenant, 290
 HORNSBY, Lieutenant, 275
 HOWELL, William B., 208, 285
 HUBBARD, Henry G., 246
 HUBBELL, J. C., 180
 HULL, Isaac, 79, 88, 105, 109, 146,
 222, 223, 229
 HUNT, Theodore, 59

 ISRAEL, Joseph, 82
 IZARD, George, 141, 145-150, 158,
 159, 205
 Ralph, 66, 68

- JACKSON, —, 291
 Benjamin, 272
 JACQUES, Gershom B., 53
 JAMES, William, 125, 126, 163, 166-
 168, 174, 185
 JARVIS, —, 193
 Joseph R., Jr., 230
 JEFFERSON, Thomas, 45, 47, 83
 JENKINS, John T., 248
 JESSUP, Thomas S., 243
 JOHNSON, Charles, 282
 Ebenezer, 271
 Henry, 273
 Jeremiah, 92
 Peter, 271
 William, 53
 JONES, Henry, 273
 Jacob, 53, 59, 112, 133
 John C., 230
 Rev. Mr., 253
 Richard B., 60
 Walter F., 230
 William, 121, 136, 142, 143, 147,
 185, 194, 202, 215, 266, 267,
 269, 281
 JUSTIN, Joshua H., 208, 269
- KEARNEY, Lawrence, 243
 KELLOGG, Lyman, 230
 KETELTAS, Samuel, 162, 208
 KETTER, Joseph, 272
 KEWSTRA, Midshipman, 275
 KING, James, 224
 KIRKWOOD, Robert, 40
 KROWN, Admiral, 235
- LABANOFF, Prince, 235
 LA LONGUE CARABINE, 107
 LAMB, A., 224
 LAMBERT, Captain, 112
 LANMAN, John, 272
 LARAWAY, Jacob, 271
 LAROUX, Lydia, 13
 Peter, 13
 LATIMER, —, 20
 George, 15
 LAUGHARNE, Captain, 105
 LAWRENCE, James, 64, 66, 68, 133,
 228
 LAWS, Alexander, 66, 68
 LAWSON, Richard H. L., 53, 54
 LEA, Midshipman, 167, 176, 187, 293
 LE COUNT, William, 273
 LEONARD, Captain, 253
 LE RENARD SUBTIL, 107
 LEWIS, Edward S., 248
 Thomas, 272
 LINDMAN, Jacob, 272
- LINDSAY, Joseph, 208
 LINHOLM, Admiral, 234
 LIVERMORE, Samuel, 265
 LIVINGSTON, Robert R., 57
 LOCKE, Admiral, 233
 LOOMIS, Augustus, 282
 Jairus, 30, 113, 115-119, 208
 Jarvis, 282
 Libbeus, 132
 LOSSING, Benson J., 129, 163, 166,
 167, 174
 LOWE, Lieutenant, 119
 LUMLY, Captain, 133, 221
 LYDE, Nathaniel, 223
- MACDONOUGH }
 MACDONOUGH }
 McDONOUGH }
 Augustin, 11
 Augustus Rodney, 246, 249,
 251-253
 Bridget, 13
 Charles Shaler, 246
 Charlotte Rosella, 246
 Frances Augusta, 246
 Hannah, 19
 Hester, 19
 James, 11-13, 19, 39, 52
 Jane, 19
 James Edward Fisher, 246
 James Thomas, 259
 John, 11-13, 19
 Joseph, 19
 Lucy Ann, 255
 Lydia, 19, 38, 59, 259, 260
 Mary, 13, 19
 Mary Ann Louisa, 246
 Micah, 13, 39
 Mrs., 112, 146, 250
 Patrick, 13
 Samuel, 19, 259
 Thomas, 11-18, 246
 Thomas Nathaniel, 246
 William Joseph, 246
 MACHESNEY, Midshipman, 282
 MACKENZIE, Alexander S., 66, 76
 MACLAY, Edgar S., 87
 MACOMB, Alexander, 138-141, 145,
 159, 160, 162, 174-176, 197, 199,
 200, 205, 209, 218, 219, 284, 297,
 298
 MACPIERSON, John, 13, 14
 Lieutenant, 243
 MADISON, James, 26, 48, 109
 MAHAN, A. T., 171, 174, 177, 197
 MAINWARING, George, 273
 MALONY, Thomas, 271
 MANNERS, Captain, 214
 MANNING, Thomas J., 230

- MAPLES, Captain, 133
 MARSHALL, John, 230
 John H., 248
 Robert, 230
 MARTIN, Surgeon, 276
 MASON, —, 229
 MAURY, M., 208
 McCABE, Surgeon, 276
 McCARTY, John, 249, 273
 McDONALD, Randall, 271
 McEWEN, 192, 273
 McGHIE, James, 166, 184, 275, 288,
 290, 292, 293
 McKENNY, John, 192, 273
 McKNIGHT, James, 53, 54
 McLANE, Allen, 40
 McMASTER, John Bach, 36
 McNIELL, Daniel, 57
 McVICKAR, Frances Brenton, 246
 MICKEL, —, 276, 291
 MICKLAN, John, 273
 MILLEN, Richard D., 248
 MILLER, William, 53
 MITCHELL, Francis J., 162, 173
 George, 64
 Surgeon, 291
 MOHAWK, 106
 MONTEATH, Walter N., 118
 Walter L., 223, 269
 MONTGOMERY, N. L., 208, 269
 MOOERS, John W., 248
 MOORE, Edward, 271
 Perkins, 272
 MORGAN, —, 227
 MOROCCO, Emperor of, 23, 47, 61, 63
 MORRIS, Charles, 61-63, 66-68, 132
 Charles V., 230
 Henry W., 248
 Richard H., 248
 Richard V., 51, 57
 MORRISON, Lieutenant, 285
 MORSE, Intrepid, 258
 MORTON, Jacob, 132
 John, 21
 MOYLURG, Lord of, 11
 MULLER, Admiral, 234
 MULLOWNEY, John, 20, 45
 MUNSON, William C., 141
 MURRAY, Alexander, 22, 51-53, 55,
 56, 236
 J., 122, 126

 NAGLE, James, 272
 NAPOLEON, Emperor, 157
 NELSON, Admiral, 70, 295
 Andrew, 271
 NEWELL, Lloyd B., 248
 NEWTON, William, 272

 NICHOLSON, Augustus, 231
 Joseph J., 90, 103, 237
 Lieutenant, 231
 NORBERRY, James, 270

 OAKLEY, Mary, 246
 OLIVIER, Hercules, 170, 184
 OSBORN, William S., 59
 OTIS, —, 229
 OTTIWELL, John, 271

 PAGE, Benjamin, Jr., 237
 Octavius A., 85, 90
 PAINE, Amasa, 248
 PALMER, Hilda, 246
 Peter S., 143
 PARKER, Captain, 221
 Purser, 276
 PARLIAMENT, 100, 233
 PARMLEE, Andrew, 271
 PARSONS, Usher, 231
 PATTERSON, Daniel T., 53, 60, 250
 PAUL, William, 186, 291
 PAULDING, Hiram, 166, 167, 181,
 195, 208
 PEAKE, William, 133
 PEARSON, Samuel, 272
 PENNINGTON, Thomas, 260
 PERRY, Oliver Hazard, 108, 126, 133,
 146, 200, 205
 Raymond, 269
 PHELPS, —, 188
 PIGOT, Captain, 213
 PLATT, Charles T., 180, 195, 208, 230,
 269
 POPE, John, 248
 POPHAM, W., 132
 PORTER, David, 41
 David D., 24, 41, 59, 84, 105,
 213, 222, 243
 John, 90
 POST, Peter, 271
 PREBLE, Edward, 23, 24, 58, 60-62,
 64-74, 77-79, 81-83, 90, 92,
 195, 236
 PRESIDENT of the U. S., 20, 31, 32,
 34-37, 45, 83, 91, 130, 131, 240,
 252, 300
 PREVOST, Sir George, 119, 123, 157-
 159, 161, 166-168, 174, 175,
 177, 197, 199, 200, 218, 287, 293,
 295
 PRING, Daniel, 123, 130, 141-143,
 160, 161, 165, 167, 169, 176, 178,
 183, 184, 186, 188, 197, 275, 279,
 286, 287, 291, 292
 PURDY, Robert, 130

- RAND, Isaac H., 230
 RANDOLPH, Thomas M., 231
 RATCHE, Charles, 272
 RAYOT, Lieutenant, 184
 READ, George, 40
 G. W., 112
 RECORD, Daniel, 281, 282
 REID, Benjamin F., 60
 RENSHAW, James, 60, 213
 RIBERO, John, 272
 RIDGELY, John, 59
 RIPLEY, Captain, 225
 ROACH, Isaac, Jr., 118
 ROBB, R. G., 248
 ROBERSON, John, 271
 ROBERTSON, James, 184, 189, 190,
 275, 290, 292
 ROBINS, William M., 161, 162, 173,
 208, 223
 ROBINSON, Captain, 24
 Thomas, 84, 271
 RODGERS, John, 51, 61, 83, 84, 222,
 243, 249
 RODNEY, Caesar, 15, 16, 22, 40
 Caesar Augustus, 16, 22, 176,
 178, 222, 249
 Thomas, 22
 ROGERS, G., 253
 ROOSEVELT, Theodore, 163, 166, 167,
 174, 195, 263
 ROSE, Joseph, 283
 ROWE, John, 66, 68
 Joseph, 274
 RUSS, John, 227
 Major, 228
 RUTLEDGE, Rev. Mr., 253, 254
- SAILLY, Peter, 135, 137, 139
 SAWYER, Horace B., 118
 Samuel, 273
 SAX, Matthew, 221
 SCRIVER, Matthew, 192, 273
 SEATON, —, 66, 68-70
 SECRETARY OF THE NAVY, 43, 45, 56,
 65, 67, 70, 71, 74, 79, 90, 93-98,
 100, 108, 120, 121, 127, 130, 131,
 136, 142-145, 147-149, 162, 163,
 182, 185, 192, 193, 201-204, 219,
 220, 229, 241, 245, 247, 251, 252,
 258, 265, 267, 269, 279, 281, 296
 SECRETARY OF STATE, 47, 48
 SECRETARY OF WAR, 35, 128, 150, 158
 SELBACK, John, 271
 SEYMOUR, Henry, 224
 SHALER, Egbert, 230
 Lucretia Ann (Denning), 111
 Lucy Ann, 111, 255
 Mrs., 217, 250
 Nathaniel, 111, 247, 255
- SHARP, John, 273
 SHAYS, John, 272
 SHEAFE, Sir R. H., 126
 SHUBRICK, Captain, 253
 Surgeon, 132
 William B., 90
 SILSBY, —, 229
 SIMMONDS, Master's Mate, 275
 SIMOND, Lewis, 132
 SINCLAIR, Midshipman, 291
 SKIPWITH, Gray, 249
 SLOANE, Robert, 237
 SLOCUM, W. M., 208
 SMART, John, 271
 SMITH, Arthur W., 274
 Benjamin, 59
 Brig. General, 148
 Captain, 102
 Edward, 282
 John, 24, 25, 58, 79, 85, 89-91
 Joseph, 26, 223, 230, 231, 272,
 281
 Lieutenant, 195
 Purnall, 271
 Robert, 43, 91, 222
 Samuel, 271
 Sidney, 27, 28, 108, 110, 113,
 115, 116, 118-120, 262, 265
 Simon, 60
 SODERSTROM, Count, 56
 SOMERS, Richard, 58, 74, 76, 78-80,
 82
 SPENCE, Keith, 53, 60
 Robert P., 53
 SPENCER, Lord, 233
 William A., 30, 192, 195, 272,
 281, 282
 STANSBURY, John, 185, 189, 195, 273,
 300
 T. E., 189
 ST. CLAIR, General, 39
 STELLWAGON, Daniel S., 162, 173
 STEPHENS, Thomas, 271
 STERRETT, Andrew, 50, 51
 STEWARD, James, 272
 STEWART, Andrew, 85
 Charles, 31, 53, 58, 67, 70, 79,
 93, 213, 221, 235-239, 242,
 245
 STOCKTON, P. A., 248
 STODDARD, Israel, 282
 STOODLEY, Nathaniel, 223
 STRATTON, Robert, 272
 SWARTWOUT, Samuel, 249
- TABEE, William, 271
 TACHÉ, Sir E. P., 170, 183
 TANGIER, Governor of, 60
 TARDY, Henry, 282

- TATE, Charles, 266
TATTNALL, Josiah, 103, 248, 249
TAYLOR, Major, 120
 George, 119
 James, 274
TERRY, General, 228
THINK, Deodrick, 273
THOMPSON, C. B., 240
 John, 271
THORN, Jonathan, 66, 68, 75, 78
 Robert L., 223
THORNTON, Captain, 29, 142
THURBER, Captain, 137
THWING, Midshipman, 269
TIERNEY, —, 233
TIMBERLAKE, John B., 249
TINGEY, Thomas, 45, 243
TODD, Surgeon, 275
TOMPKINS, Governor, 144, 157, 209,
 218, 223, 224
 Griffin, 231
TOORKE, Midshipman, 275, 291
TOTTEN, Joseph G., 137
TOWNS, John, 272
TRIPOLI, Bashaw of, 48, 64, 66, 74,
 80, 82
TRIPPE, John, 74, 76
TRUMBULL, —, 228
 John, 26, 118
TUCKER, Captain, 213
TUNIS, Bey of, 48, 84
TURK, William, 249-251, 254
TURKEY, Sultan of, 48
TURNER, Charles C., 248
 Samuel S., 230
TYLER, Henry B., 248

UNCAS, 107
UPSHUR, George P., 230
U. S. MILITARY PHILOSOPHICAL
 SOCIETY, 132

VALENTINE, Joseph, 192, 273
VALLETTE, Elie A. F., 150, 170, 185,
 195, 208, 230, 231, 248, 269
VANCE, John, 18
 Samuel, 18
VANDERMERE, Peter, 272
VANDEURSEN, William, 89
VAN DE VENTER, Christopher, 118
VANHORN, Jesse, 272

VAN RENSSELAER, Solomon, 224
 Stephen, 211

WADSWORTH, Henry, 82
WALES, Captain, 213
WALKER, William S., 231
WALLACE, John, 272
WALTERS, Abraham, 118, 273
WARD, James H., 196, 248
WARRINGTON, Lewis, 24, 85, 132,
 213, 222
WASHINGTON, George, 14, 34, 35,
 112, 227
WATSON, Samuel E., 223
WELLINGTON, Duke of, 157
WELLS, Henry, 223
WHINYATES, Captain, 112
WHITE, John, 271
WILKES, Charles, Jr., 231
WILKINSON, James, 128, 130, 137-
 141, 150, 158, 205, 220
 Jesse, 90
WILLIAMS, Jerome, 271
 Jonathan, 132
 Lieutenant, 119
 William, 271
WILLIAMSON, Midshipman, 269
WILSON, John, 282
 Nace, 272
 Stephen B., 231
WINDER, General, 211
WINSHIP, James, 272
WINSLOW, Samuel, 208
WINSOR, Justin, 35
WINTER, Elisha, 192
WOLCOTT, Oliver, 228, 244
WOOD, John, 272
 John H., 90
WOOLSEY, Melancthon T., 220, 265
WORMLEY, Wallace, 60
WORTHINGTON, Thomas B., 230
WYER, William, 270
WYMAN, T. W., 248

YEO, Sir James Lucas, 108, 112, 133,
 169, 171, 174, 186, 188, 197, 209,
 214, 286, 287, 293, 296
YOUNG, James, 285
YOUNGS, White, 189, 208, 269, 284,
 285

INDEX OF PLACES

- ADRIATIC SEA, 24
ALBANY, N. Y., 28, 102, 110, 124,
155, 157, 193, 210, 211, 223, 224
ALGECIRAS BAY, 236, 238
ALGIERS, Algeria, 33-35, 40, 47,
49, 50, 54, 57, 63, 222
AMERICA, 11, 35, 216, 238
ANCONA, Italy, 24, 84
ANN, CAPE, 103
ASH ISLAND, 148
ATLANTIC OCEAN, 61, 88
AUSTRIA, 31, 236
- BALTIC SEA, 234
BALTIMORE, Md., 34, 89
BASIN HARBOR, Vt., 108
BEEKMANTOWN, N. Y., 160
BIG CHAZY RIVER, 129
BOSTON, Mass., 25, 28, 33, 34, 60,
90, 94-98, 103, 120, 134, 144,
145, 214, 229, 230, 243
BOUQUET RIVER, 143
BRANDY POTS, 293
BRAZIL, 95
BROOKLYN, N. Y., 122, 243
BURLINGTON, Vt., 26, 28, 104, 106,
109, 111, 113, 120, 121, 123-128,
134, 135, 137, 139, 141, 142, 145,
147, 150, 153, 162, 164, 167, 200,
201, 209, 219, 221, 285
- CADIZ, Spain, 60, 63
CALCUTTA, India, 25, 94, 99
CAMPEACHY, Mexico, 95
CANADA, 27, 29, 106, 108, 111, 125,
127, 128, 147, 155, 159, 286
CANADA, Lower, 119, 157
CANARY ISLANDS, 25
CAYUGA COUNTY, N. Y., 193, 209
CHAMPLAIN, N. Y., 116, 118, 129,
137, 138, 157, 158, 160, 265
CHAMPLAIN, LAKE, 18, 26, 27, 100,
104, 106-108, 110-112, 119, 121,
122, 128, 130, 132, 134, 136, 143,
146, 152, 153, 155, 157, 158, 163,
166, 170, 171, 185, 194, 197, 200,
202, 205-208, 211, 212, 215, 216,
218-220, 223-225, 228, 229, 234,
244, 246, 255, 257, 258, 263,
265-267, 270, 279, 285, 287, 291,
293, 294, 299
- CHAMPLAIN RIVER, 129
CHARLESTON, S. C., 25, 90
CHARLESTOWN, Mass., 101, 120, 121,
221, 229, 232
CHATHAM, Conn., 212
CHAZY, N. Y., 129, 137, 140, 148,
151, 153, 158-160, 180, 201,
221
CHESAPEAKE BAY, 22, 51, 103, 133,
213
COD, CAPE, 234
CONNECTICUT, 91, 193, 227, 244,
254, 258
CONSTANTINOPLE, Turkey, 48
COPENHAGEN, Denmark, 31, 234
CORLEAR'S HOOK, N. Y., 214
COWES, Isle of, Wight, 231, 233, 234
CRAB ISLAND, 172, 173, 180, 185, 188,
200, 289, 291
CRAFT'S ISLAND, 203
CRONSTADT, Russia, 229, 232, 234,
235
CROWN POINT, N. Y., 107, 158
CUMBERLAND BAY, 171
CUMBERLAND HEAD, 128-130, 149,
150, 159, 160, 171-173, 175, 176,
178, 193, 228
- DEAD CREEK, 135, 160
DE GATT, CAPE, 60, 240
DELAWARE, 12-15, 17, 18, 20-22,
38, 40, 77, 84, 88, 99, 193, 249,
255, 258-260
DELAWARE, CAPES OF, 21, 251
DELAWARE RIVER, 14, 250
DOURO, RIVER, 157
DOVER, Del., 14
DRAWYERS CREEK, 18
DUBLIN, Ireland, 11
- EAST INDIES, 94, 95
EBRO RIVER, 157
ELSINEUR, Denmark, 31, 234
ENGLAND, 18, 25, 31, 87, 89, 100,
107, 245, 295
ENGLISH CHANNEL, 31, 233, 235
ERIE, LAKE, 107, 108, 126, 133, 165,
195, 200, 206, 214, 266
ESSEX, N. Y., 141
EUROPE, 247

- FRANCE, 25, 34, 37, 40, 45, 46, 52,
57, 85, 87, 89, 107, 157, 263
- GARONNE RIVER, 157
- GEORGE, LAKE, 153, 157
- GERMANY, 235
- GHENT, Belgium, 221
- GIBRALTAR, 22-24, 31, 50, 54, 60,
61, 63, 85, 235, 239, 240, 249,
250
- GIBRALTAR BAY, 239
- GIBRALTAR, STRAIT OF, 33
- GRAVELLY POINT, 127, 176
- GREAT BRITAIN, 26, 100, 296
- GREENBUSH, N. Y., 167, 189, 275
- HAMPDEN, Me., 214
- HAMPTON ROADS, 249
- HARPER'S FERRY, Va., 91
- HARTFORD, Conn., 99, 223-228, 231,
258
- HAVANA, Cuba, 21, 22
- HENLOPEN, CAPE, 51
- HERCULANAEUM, Italy, 24
- HOSPITAL ISLAND, 116
- HUDSON RIVER, 110, 157, 158
- INDIA, 25, 94, 95, 98
- IRELAND, 11
- ISLE AUX NOIX, 27-29, 116, 119, 122
128-130, 135, 138, 143, 147-151,
160, 184, 186, 188, 200, 219, 221,
293
- ISLE LA MOTTE, 160, 161, 201, 287
- ITALY, 84
- KENNEBUNK, Me., 103
- KENT COUNT, Del., 15
- KILDARE COUNTY, Ireland, 11
- KINGSTON, Canada, 219, 286
- LACOLLE MILL, Canada, 137, 158
- LACOLLE RIVER, 111
- LANSINGBURGH, N. Y., 193, 297-299
- LEGHORN, Italy, 53, 54, 240
- LEWES, Del., 14
- LIFFEY RIVER, 11
- LISBON, Portugal, 25, 99
- LITTLE CHAZY, N. Y., 288
- LIVERPOOL, England, 25, 94, 95
- LONDON, England, 166, 197, 231
- LONG ISLAND, N. Y., 11, 12, 14, 91, 93
- MADEIRA ISLAND, 25
- MAINE, 93, 119
- MAJORCA ISLAND, 54
- MALAGA, Spain, 51, 52, 54, 236
- MALTA, ISLAND OF, 24, 54, 63, 69,
73, 84
- MCDONOUGH, Del., 38
- MEDITERRANEAN SEA, 22, 23, 25,
31-33, 50, 51, 57-59, 72, 85,
88-90, 92, 195, 229, 231, 235,
241, 242, 244, 245, 249, 251, 255
- MESSINA, Sicily, 72, 235, 236
- MEXICO, GULF OF, 88
- MIDDLETOWN, Conn., 25, 32, 38, 88,
89, 92, 93, 95-97, 99, 100, 111,
112, 210-212, 217, 222, 241,
243-245, 248, 253, 254, 260
- MIDDLETOWN, Del., 12, 17, 39
- MONTREAL, Canada, 107, 128, 152,
157, 186, 221, 294
- MOROCCO, 49, 57, 61
- MOUNT AETNA, Italy, 24
- NAPLES, Italy, 24, 31, 54, 236-238
- NAPLES, BAY OF, 237
- NEEDLES, 233
- NEW CASTLE, Del., 21, 43
- NEW CASTLE COUNTY, Del., 12, 14-
16
- NEW ENGLAND, 157, 174
- NEW HAMPSHIRE, 119, 298
- NEW LONDON, Conn., 133, 213
- NEW ORLEANS, La., 93
- NEWTOWN, L. I., 11, 12
- NEW YORK CITY, 25, 26, 28, 30, 34,
89, 91, 94, 98, 109, 110, 112, 113,
120-123, 132, 136, 145, 155, 158,
170, 193, 201, 203, 209, 214, 215,
217, 219, 220, 224, 240-243,
245, 246, 248, 250-252, 254, 267,
296, 297
- NEW YORK STATE, 21, 32, 143, 144,
157-159, 193, 200, 202, 209, 211,
223-229, 253, 297, 298
- NIAGARA FALLS, 32
- NIAGARA RIVER, 215
- NORFOLK, Va., 21, 34
- NORWICH, Conn., 93
- ODESSA, Del., 17
- ODLETOWN, Canada, 130
- ONTARIO, LAKE, 100, 107, 108, 133,
147, 158, 165, 171, 214, 219, 293,
- OTTER CREEK, 29, 130, 134, 135, 139,
140-143, 146
- OTTER RIVER, 29
- PALERMO, Sicily, 54, 236
- PANTON, Vt., 141
- PASSAMAQUODDY, 90
- PASSARO, CAPE, 63
- PENOBSCOT RIVER, 214
- PHILADELPHIA, Pa., 21, 22, 33, 34,
44, 51, 54, 59, 153, 231, 250

- PLATTSBURG, N. Y., 27, 29, 30, 109-111, 114, 122, 126, 127, 129, 130, 135, 137-141, 145-147, 149, 153, 158-160, 162, 164, 172-175, 185, 189, 190, 192, 194, 197, 200, 201, 208, 218, 219, 223, 267, 268, 278-282, 284, 287, 294-297, 299
- PLATTSBURG BAY, 115, 159, 160, 171, 176, 195, 200, 202, 266, 267, 279, 287
- POINT AU FER, 116, 148, 151, 152, 202
- POINT AU ROCHE, 149
- POMPEII, Italy, 24
- PORTLAND, Me., 26, 101-104, 112
- PORTSMOUTH, England, 233, 291
- PORTSMOUTH, N. H., 30, 34, 73, 103, 214, 222, 223, 298
- PORTUGAL, 33
- PRESIDENT ROADS, 230
- PROVIDENCE ISLAND, 141
- QUEBEC, Canada, 13, 14, 32, 118, 119, 122, 147, 148, 170, 290, 295
- RENSSELAER COUNTY, N. Y., 297, 298
- RICHELIEU RIVER, 107, 108, 115, 127, 129, 137, 141, 150, 161, 200, 262
- ROME, Italy, 24
- ROUSE'S POINT, N. Y., 137, 139, 150
- RUSSIA, 31, 229, 231
- SACKETT'S HARBOR, N. Y., 128, 158, 200, 265
- SACO, Me., 103
- SALMON LEAP, Ireland, 11
- SAMPSON'S, N. Y., 160
- SANDY HOOK, 248
- SARANAC RIVER, 161, 172
- SHELBURNE, Vt., 27, 111, 113
- SHETLAND ISLANDS, 31, 235
- SICILY, 73
- SOREL, Canada, 135
- SPAIN, 155
- SPITHEAD, England, 233, 234
- ST. ALBANS, Vt., 164
- ST. ALBANS HEAD, 233
- ST. DOMINGO, 21
- STERLING, N. Y., 209
- ST. GEORGE'S HUNDRED, Del., 12, 13, 18
- ST. HELENA, ISLAND OF, 25
- ST. JOHNS, Canada, 128, 136, 138
- ST. LAWRENCE RIVER, 32
- ST. PETERSBURG, Russia, 31, 235
- SUSSEX COUNTY, Del., 14, 15
- SYRACUSE, Sicily, 23, 24, 31, 54, 63, 65, 67, 70, 72, 73, 83, 84, 235
- TAGUS RIVER, 157
- TANGIER, MOROCCO, 23, 61
- TENERIFFE ISLAND, 25
- TICONDEROGA, N. Y., 106, 107, 158
- TOULON, France, 54, 70
- TRAFALGAR, 295
- TRAP, Del., 12, 13, 17, 18, 22, 38, 39, 59, 222
- TRIESTE, Austria, 24, 84
- TRIPOLI, Tripoli, 22-24, 46, 48-50, 54-58, 64, 65, 67, 73, 74, 78, 82-84, 93, 196, 263
- TROY, N. Y., 144, 210, 220
- TUNIS, Tunis, 48-50, 54, 57, 73, 85, 236
- UNITED STATES, 20-22, 24-26, 31, 33, 34, 36, 37, 47-50, 57, 79, 83, 85, 87, 89, 95-97, 99, 100, 106-108, 202, 222, 227, 233, 235, 236, 238, 240, 241, 245, 249, 262, 296
- VALCOUR ISLAND, 107
- VENICE, Italy, 24, 84
- VERDE, CAPE, 25
- VERGENNES, Vt., 28, 130, 134-136, 138-144, 146, 150, 204, 282
- VERMONT, 108, 139, 141, 159, 188, 193, 210, 218, 244
- VIRGINIA, 21.
- WASHINGTON, D. C., 25, 26, 30, 54, 59, 89, 91, 94, 95, 101, 102, 136, 147, 222, 241-243, 296, 299
- WATERLOO, Belgium, 155
- WEST INDIES, 11, 21, 22
- WETHERSFIELD, Conn., 224
- WHITEHALL, N. Y., 26, 106, 109, 110, 113, 200, 203, 204, 210, 218, 219, 221
- WHITE MOUNTAINS, 26
- WHITE PLAINS, N. Y., 14
- WILMINGTON, Del., 12, 14, 51
- WIND MILL POINT, 137, 151
- YALE COLLEGE, 153

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